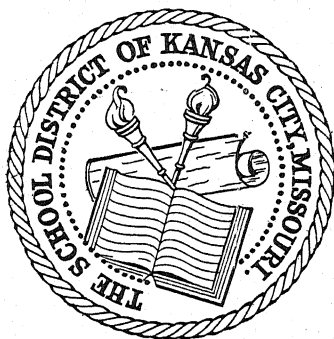


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SELECTED LETTERS,



CHIEFLY ON

PERSONAL RELIGION.

BY THE REV. JOHN WESLEY, A. M.

WITH

A SKETCH OF HIS CHARACTER,

BY REV. SAMUEL BRADBURN.

NEW-YORK;

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PREFACE

TO

WESLEY'S SELECT LETTERS.

To every one who carefully studies Mr. Wesley's character and history, it must appear that for nothing was this great man more distinguished than simplicity of purpose. From the time at which he obtained the salvation of the gospel, to the close of his eventful life, he was eminently a man of one business. He preached with almost unexampled diligence, he employed the press upon an extensive scale, during more than half a century, for the exclusive purpose of turning men from sin to Christ, and of building them up in holiness. To the same pious and benevolent objects his correspondence was directed. Notwithstanding the multiplicity of his engagements, he found time to write numerous letters to persons who solicited his advice, and cultivated his friendship. Many of these have been preserved. They consist not of idle gossip; nor are they intended to nourish a sickly sentimentality; but to urge forward his correspondents in the divine life, that they might attain all the mind that was in Christ, and make their calling and election sure. With the same design the following selections are published. They present an agreeable variety of subjects; and it is hoped will prove acceptable to a numerous class of readers to whom the entire works of the venerable writer are inaccessible. To the use of the closet, and of private reading, it is presumed, they are especially adapted.

The "Sketch of Mr. Wesley's Character," by which the letters are introduced, was published in Manchester,

in the year 1791. It was appended to a sermon by Mr. Rodda, which was preached in that town on the occasion of Mr. Wesley's death. It is in Mr. Bradburn's best manner, and contains several interesting notices concerning the founder of Methodism which are not generally known. They are presented in an authentic form, as the result of personal knowledge and observation. For many years this valuable document has been out of print; and its republication cannot but be acceptable to the devout and intelligent reader.

THOMAS JACKSON.

London, May 15, 1837.

A SKETCH
OF
MR. WESLEY'S CHARACTER,
BY THE
REV. SAMUEL BRADBURN.

SUCH is the character of the Rev. Mr. Wesley, that it would require his own abilities to do it justice. His memory is dear to many thousands, who will gladly receive any testimony in his favour that comes well authenticated. Those who know me will not doubt my veracity; and charity will incline those who do not to believe the best: and I promise to write nothing but what I know to be true.

I am not going to write Mr. Wesley's history. My chief design is to give a short sketch of those leading virtues which were so uniformly exemplified in the conduct of this truly great man.

I judge it necessary to do this without delay, because (though many encomiums have been given him in the public prints, yet) several falsehoods have been circulated respecting that part of his character which, of all others, is the most blameless, namely, his having left great sums of money to his friends. This is not to be wondered at: for many years ago he was accused of laying up riches; his income was calculated, and no bishop in England was supposed to have such a revenue! It is true, this was done by persons totally ignorant of him and his concerns. Nevertheless, as the belief of such a report

might hinder his usefulness, he thought proper to reply to it. In his "Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion," he clears himself from this slanderous accusation in the strongest terms. He declares that if he left ten pounds behind him, after his debts were paid, the world might call him a thief and a robber. Now the question is, Has he left ten pounds behind him, when his debts are paid? In considering this question, a circumstance must be kept in view which will clearly and fully determine it: that is, his stock of books on sale has of late years greatly increased. And when he repeated the above declaration in public, which I have heard him do many times, he added, "except my books." These were the only property worthy of note that he had. The library in his study is very small; and is to remain where it is, for the use of the preachers who may at any time be stationed in London.

The house he lived in when in London was, in reality, as much mine, or any other preacher's, when stationed there, as it was his. The furniture as well as the house, and all the houses and furniture, in London and everywhere else, belong to the connection at large; and are committed to the care of trustees in each place, for the use of the preachers for the time being, who never stay more than three years successively in one circuit.

Mr. Wesley's other personal effects were very trifling. Till lately he kept very few clothes by him. I myself have been constrained by my own feelings to speak to some friends to clothe him, he has been so bare; and so have other preachers to my knowledge. His gowns, cassocks, and bands were mostly given to him; and he has left them for the use of the clergymen who officiate at the New Chapel. Within a few years past, his wearing apparel has increased by particular friends making him presents of such things as they thought he wanted, but would not buy for himself. After all, some of the preachers, and most ministers in England, have more clothes than he had at his death; and the London assistant is appointed to

divide them among those four of the travelling preachers that want them most.

He was always very backward to lay out any money on his own account. He could not bear to see the poor in want, if he could possibly relieve them. He sold the very pictures off the walls, and even mourning rings, which had been left him, to get money for them. When it became necessary for him to travel in a chaise, his particular friends defrayed all the expense of it, by voluntary subscriptions. He has left the chaise and horses to two gentlemen, in trust, to be sold, and the money to be divided among a number of poor people in London. His watch he has left to Mr. Bradford, to whose care he owed, under God, his very life many times, and to whom the Methodist connection is under great obligations. He has served it many years with zeal and fidelity, from the most disinterested motives. May God reward him!

Real estate Mr. Wesley had none. Many years ago he was enabled, by a charitable donation, to build the school at Kingswood, for the benefit of the sons of the travelling preachers; and it has hitherto been supported by public collections. Whatever right or title he had to this, or any thing in it, or belonging to it, he conveyed, by a regular deed, dated the 25th of February, 1786, to three of the preachers, in trust, for the rest, to be employed as usual.

So much for Mr. Wesley's temporal affairs. Now let any man of reason and religion, taking all things into the account, judge whether he has not kept his word. Consider the property the preachers have in the stock of books, and the heavy debt it is subject to, and, in the strictest sense that his words will bear, he has not left ten pounds behind him! And I ask with amazement, considering the thousands of pounds that passed through his hands, most of which he might have saved, what man, in such a situation, could have acted, from first to last, better than he did? For more than fifty years his labours in the ministry have

astonished the world ; and to the close of his life he could boldly declare, without fearing to be confronted,—

“The things eternal I pursue,
A happiness beyond the view
Of those who basely pant
For things by nature felt and seen;
Their honours, wealth, and pleasures mean,
I neither have nor want.”

I can scarcely refrain from exclaiming,—

“O for a clap of thunder, as loud
As to be heard throughout the universe,
To tell the world the fact, and to applaud it !”

My feelings have carried me forward farther than I intended. I meant to give an account of Mr. Wesley's property when I came to speak of his charities ; but I shall leave it where it is, and proceed with the account of his character.

To form a great man, there must be great powers, exerted in an uncommon manner, producing extraordinary effects. Education draws forth these powers, and mostly determines their application. Some, whose abilities have only been great in one particular way, have nevertheless been famous by their talents being happily suited to their station, and the part they had to act. Had their situation been changed, they would have sunk into obscurity. Others have possessed such extensive parts, that they would have shone in any sphere of action. Such was Mr. Wesley. He had strong intellectual powers : a mind comprehensive and vigorous in all its faculties, a penetrating judgment, a capacious and retentive memory, a lively imagination, and a sublime genius. He was educated from his very infancy in the various branches of literature which were necessary to form the scholar and the gentleman ; and he pursued, through the whole of his life, the attainment of still higher degrees of such accomplishments as generally excite esteem and admiration. So

that had divine Providence placed him in any other rank in life, I have no doubt but he would have excelled. Had he been called to the bar, or the senate, his extensive knowledge and powerful eloquence would have signalized him among the greatest statesmen and orators. He was fond of history and philosophy. His publications are sufficient proofs of his abilities as a writer. He had a fine taste for poetry, and composed himself many of our hymns; but he told me that he and his brother agreed not to distinguish their hymns from each other's. He frequently chose to express his thoughts, either in conversation or preaching, in verse, and even in rhyme. It would be no unpleasing task to me (if my plan would have admitted it) to insert in this place, what I think would be pleasing to many, namely, hundreds of lines on various subjects, which he used to repeat; but this must be left to his historian. Some have thought him, in preaching, too poetical, because he often used bold and figurative expressions. He considered words as poor, ill-drawn pictures of our thoughts. I remember, in conversation with him once on this very head, he told me that he heard his father say, "One certain proof of a man's having little real genius was his being difficult and nice in choosing his words." Mr. Wesley never appeared greater in my esteem than when the vast conceptions of his towering soul seemed to beggar all the extravagance of hyperbole. Yet he knew how "to contain the fury of his fancy within the bounds of reason." He was no enthusiast. He was not a random preacher: I recollect his bringing a public charge, in our conference, against a preacher for preaching, in the strict sense of the word, extempore, that is, without premeditation. In his Notes on the New Testament he has the following remarkable passage:—"Through this whole discourse we cannot but observe the most exact method which can possibly be conceived. Every paragraph, every sentence is closely connected both with that which precedes and that which follows it. And is not this the pattern for every

Christian preacher? If any, then, are able to follow it, without premeditation, well; if not, let them not dare to preach without it. No rhapsody, no incoherency, whether the things spoken be true or false, comes of the Spirit of Christ." Matt. v, 10. I wish all those who talk of saying in public "what God gives them," (as their phrase is,) would attend to Mr. Wesley in this particular.

No man living more firmly believed in, or attended to, a divine influence, than he did. And if ever man was inspired of God, in delivering the sacred truths of Christianity, he was. I have seen him when his holy soul has been elevated with heavenly joy, and drawn out by supernatural assistance to a great degree of devout ardour. But this did not so much respect what he said, as what he felt, and his manner of saying it; his matter was taken from the oracles of God. He was different from himself at different times. But this was when nature was almost exhausted, either with preaching too often in a day, or when he had been unavoidably engaged in company or business till it was time to begin. But even then he had not his subject to seek; for as he constantly preached out of some part of the scriptures for the day, as appointed in the prayer book, and as he read these commonly the first thing he did in the morning, he then fixed upon the texts. he intended to preach on through the day, which were frequently four. I was always sorry when I knew he was to preach so often; because, in general, one or two of his sermons would be far beneath what he could have made them had he preached but twice. But when he shone least, what a gentleman in Edinburgh said (who had heard him at an unfavourable time) was always true: "It was not a masterly sermon, yet none but a master could have preached it." As an orator he was a perfect model to every Christian minister. His gestures were graceful and harmonious. His style was delicately chaste; yet he has said, in a letter now before me, "As for me, I never think of my style at all, but just set down the words that come

first. Only when I transcribe any thing for the press, then I think it my duty to see that every phrase be clear, pure, proper, and easy. Conciseness (which is now, as it were, natural to me) brings *quantum sufficit* of strength." In this account there is every property of a good style; and such was his at all times. Indeed, all the graces of rhetoric, uniting in the happiest combination, both in his action and utterance, rendered him one of the most finished speakers that ever adorned a pulpit. He was always accurate without being stiff, and clear without ever being tedious: there was an easy simplicity in his whole deportment, but nothing mean or childish: in his pathetic energy there was no rant or wild fire; nor was he ever pompous, though mostly elegant, and often sublime.

He was a great reader from his very youth. Hence his mind was richly stored with vast treasures of useful and entertaining knowledge. He had an almost inexhaustible fund of stories and anecdotes, adapted to all kinds of people, and to every occurrence in life. These he related with a propriety peculiar to himself. Few men had a greater share of vivacity when in company with those he loved, especially on his journeys. If the weather or the roads happened to be disagreeable, or if any little accident befel any of his fellow-travellers, without their being hurt, with what inimitable turns of wit would he strive to keep up their spirits, feeling himself happy in endeavouring to please; so that it was almost impossible to be dull or dissatisfied in his company. The first time I ever was introduced to him, I was greatly struck with his cheerfulness and affability: and the opinion I then formed of him on this head, I never altered to this moment. From seeing him only in the pulpit, and considering his exalted station in the church of Christ, I supposed he was very reserved and austere; but how agreeably was I disappointed when, with a pleasant smile, he took me familiarly by the hand, and said, "Beware of the fear of man; and be sure you speak flat and plain in

preaching!" It is not easy to express the good effect this advice had on my mind at that time: it was a word in season. I never saw him low-spirited in my life, nor could he endure to be with a melancholy person. When speaking of any who imagined religion would make people morose or gloomy, I have heard him say in the pulpit, "that sour godliness is the devil's religion." In his answer to a letter I had written to him, (in a time of strong temptation,) he has these words: "That melancholy turn is directly opposite to a Christian spirit. Every believer ought to enjoy life." He never suffered himself to be carried away by extreme grief. I heard him say, "I dare no more fret than curse and swear." That placid serenity which so fully and constantly possessed his soul shone with ineffable sweetness through his expressive countenance, and communicated its benign influences to the large circles of his friends, who crowded together wherever he went, to enjoy the benefit of his conversation. On such occasions, he kindly condescended to a familiar equality, and concealed the great philosopher and divine in the social companion. He was a truly well-bred man. Had he lived in a court all his days, his address could not have been more easy and polite; yet he could be quite content among the most homely tradesmen or peasants, and suit his discourse to the meanest capacity. His courtesy to every one was very engaging, especially to young people. I have heard him repeatedly say, "I reverence a young man, because he may be useful when I am in the dust!" He was very fond of children, though he never had any of his own. Hundreds of these will remember with pleasure, perhaps with profit, the notice he took of them. Little things often discover our real sentiments more than things of importance. When he stooped to unbend his mind with children he found an artless innocence, and a disinterested love, which sweetly corresponded with the generous feelings of his own heart. Our Saviour viewed them in this light when he said, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven."

What a tacit slur is this upon all the deep designs of human art!

He had an invincible attachment to truth and justice. His abhorrence of dissimulation is sufficiently manifested in his sermon on the character of Nathanael. From that sermon alone it is easy to conclude in what light he viewed every species of deception. And as he used no guile himself, neither did he suspect it in others. He was governed by that charity which believeth all things. This sometimes laid him open to the crafty designs of insinuating parasites, who took the advantage of his credulity, and imposed upon his good nature. And if ever he acted wrong, it was chiefly owing to the misplaced confidence he had in such. It was not easy to make him allow that any one had purposely deceived him. And when convinced by facts, he endeavoured to cover the fault, and as far as possible to excuse the offender. This is a distinguishing characteristic of a liberal soul, and is a sufficient reason why great and holy men are so frequently exposed to imposition. They walk in the integrity of their own hearts.

“And oft though wisdom wake, suspicion sleeps.
At wisdom's gate, and to simplicity
Resigns her charge, while goodness thinks no ill;
Where no ill seems.”

In forgiving injuries, he evidenced to all who knew him how much he lived under the power of divine love. Though he was often critically situated, having to deal with men of different principles and opposite interests; and though he had naturally a keen sense of honour, and a quick apprehension of what ought to be upon all occasions, consequently must have been severely tried in his temper: nevertheless, if ever he happened to drop a warm expression, however great the provocation might be, he was humbled into the dust in a moment, and would never rest till the party concerned was reconciled to him. And as he was ever ready to forgive a crime, so he was to forget it. He rose superior

to the timid caution of little minds, that can never make a friend of one whom they have had cause to pardon :

“ He held it cowardice
To rest mistrustful where a noble heart
Hath pawn'd an open hand in sign of love.”

Were it proper, I could produce many instances, that are fresh in my memory, in which his love to his enemies was truly astonishing.

He did not love to reprove any one, not even the meanest domestic. This was the more surprising, because no man was ever better qualified to reprove in every form. He could be poignantly satirical when he thought it the most proper method to expose the ridiculous singularity of a pedant, or chastise the supercilious airs of a coxcomb. But though I have known him successful in this way, yet he considered it as meddling with edge tools, and gave very little countenance to it, either in himself or others. He did not love a trifler ; any thing like religious buffoonery he abhorred ; above all, any lightness in the pulpit was an abomination to him. He considered the various ills of life, and the awfulness of death, with that deep attention which they deserve. The torments of hell, and the sufferings of the Son of God, he set forth in such an earnest and serious manner as greatly affected both himself and his hearers. He entered into the spirit of his subject, and felt what he said. I have seen his lips quiver, and the tears run down his cheeks, when with the most moving language he has been entreating his congregation to live for eternity. His power of persuasion was very great, especially when engaged in behalf of the poor. Hence frequent applications were made to him to preach charity sermons in many of the churches in London. This was a subject that exactly suited his own benevolent disposition. The poor lay very near his heart. Of this he gave the most unequivocal demonstration through the whole course of his life. He not only preached sermons in their behalf, but contrived by various other methods to raise

contributions for them. I myself have gone with him from house to house, both to our own people, and others that were well disposed, to beg money to buy bread, coals, and clothing for the poor in London: and that not when the weather was warm and dry, but in the depth of winter, when the melted snow has in many places been over our shoes, so that I have been forced to desist by taking violent colds. Should this paper fall into the hands of any of those to whom he applied, I doubt not but it will cause them to drop a tear by bringing to their remembrance the times they have seen him rejoicing at his success in this labour of Christian love. O, ye widows and orphans! ye aged and infirm! witness how often he has banished care and sorrow from your dreary habitations, and caused the voice of gladness and thanksgiving to be heard in your garrets and cellars! Who now shall lift up the hands that hang down, and confirm the feeble knees? He whose bowels yearned over you with tender compassion,—your amiable, benevolent benefactor, is no more! May God raise you up many to supply his place!

Mr. Wesley's diligence to serve the poor by these methods was not to save his own money. He gave all he could, which was no inconsiderable sum. In the year 1781 I travelled with him through several circuits; by which means I had an opportunity of knowing how his accounts stood: and I know that he gave away within the year from the Bristol conference, 1780, to the Leeds conference, 1781, in private charities, above fourteen hundred pounds! I do not mention that year as if he never did the like before or since, but because I know he did it then. He told me himself in London, in the year 1787, that he never gave away out of his own pocket less than a thousand pounds a year. To enable him to do this, he had, first, the profits of the books which the preachers sold,—(except ten per cent., which some of them took for about eighteen years past.) This proves (let him have died worth what he may) that all he had in strict justice be-

longed to the body of the preachers. These kept themselves low to put it into his power to be thus liberal, because they loved him; but for them he could not have done it. He had, secondly, from London and Bristol, on an average, about one hundred and fifty pounds per annum by private subscriptions. Thirdly, the society in London gave him thirty pounds a year; which was all the fixed stipend he had. Fourthly, every year almost there were legacies left him. Fifthly, as he went his journeys, the friends in each large society where he preached generally gave him a few pounds when he was going away. Thus, literally having nothing, he possessed all things; and though poor, he made many rich. His manner of bestowing his charity was truly pleasing: he never relieved poor people in the street, but he either took off or moved his hat to them when they thanked him. And in private he took care not to hurt the most refined feelings of those he assisted.

He was ever attentive to a particular providence. His Works at large, especially his Journals, furnish many proofs of this. He took God into his account in every thing. He was not ashamed to pray concerning any thing that he took in hand. This was living Scripturally.

He never, comparatively speaking, suffered much bodily pain, at least not long together, though his constitution was exceedingly delicate. This he frequently mentions in his Journals. When he was eighty-one years old, he wrote thus of himself: "I find myself just as strong to labour, and as fit for any exercise of body or mind, as I was forty years ago. I do not impute this to second causes, but to the sovereign Lord of all." At the same time he never neglected second causes. He was as temperate as any Christian need to be in meat, drink, and sleep. He was remarkably clean in every thing: his clothes, his study, and his books were not only free from dirt, but they were kept in the most exact order. He often said, "Cleanliness is next to godliness." This neatness in every thing

contributes more to health than people in general imagine ; and regularity prevents uneasiness of mind, which is more hurtful to the body than many are aware of. But though he would not suffer any thing slovenly about him, he had an utter aversion to any thing gaudy.

Nothing could displease him more than want of exactness in any that he had to do with. He was regular in every thing, and particularly punctual to his appointments. He was very observing wherever he went, and thought nothing beneath his notice in which he could improve either himself or others ; yet no one could be more quiet in the house, or give less trouble to servants.

In the redemption of his time he excelled all I ever knew. He took the advice which he gave the preachers : "Never be unemployed a moment. Never be triflingly employed. Never while away time." But though he was always diligent, he never seemed in a hurry. He mostly wrote standing, and to look at he was a very slow writer ; yet by his close application and unremitting perseverance what volumes has he produced ! He added to his industry an amazing patience of fatigue. Where almost any one else would have failed, his active, enterprising spirit enabled him unweariedly to pursue his purpose till he succeeded.

As an Englishman, Mr. Wesley was true to his king and country. As a minister, he loved the Established Church. His sentiments on these subjects are printed, and I must refer to his Works. His religious opinions you have seen in the first part of this pamphlet. In these he steadily lived and died ; but he was no bigot. His sermon on a Catholic Spirit, published many years ago, and an article (in a late number of the Magazine) called, "A new Phenomenon," show his candour and the liberality of his mind. I mention these two, because so many years passed between the times of their being published. Whoever reads his various tracts will find the most determined adherence to the principles of universal toleration, from his beginning to his death.

His modesty prevented his saying much of his own experience. In public he very seldom, hardly ever, spoke of the state of his own soul. Sometimes he indirectly mentioned a conscientious regard for sundry things, and that his conscience would not let him do the opposites. But still he did not, when speaking of doctrines, produce himself as an evidence. He knew that "the truth of a doctrine, and the rectitude of a character, had no necessary connection." Yet he was sufficiently explicit among his friends. He told me, when with him in Yorkshire, in the year 1781, that "his experience might almost any time be found in the following lines :—

‘O Thou who camest from above,
The pure celestial fire t’ impart,
Kindle a flame of sacred love
On the mean altar of my heart !
There let it for thy glory burn
With inextinguishable blaze,
And trembling to its source return,
In humble love and fervent praise.’ ”

A soul that in general could express its feelings in these verses could not but be happy. And that he thought so himself is plain to me, for he often would stop when we were writing together, and, looking up with a pleasant countenance, would say,—

“ Lord, how happy is the heart,
After thee while it aspires !”

He would add some text of Scripture, or a short sentence from some favourite author, and then pursue his business. In the year 1783 I heard him say in Leeds chapel (when preaching on, “I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord”) that, after all his travelling in the service of God, and all his preaching and praying, he saw nothing to depend upon but, “God be merciful to me a sinner !” The same I heard him repeat at Sheffield last summer. This to me was very satisfactory, and his latter end well agreed with such a habit of living. I could

here indulge a melancholy pleasure in expatiating on his humility, his love, his communion with God, and all the graces of the Holy Spirit which he so fully possessed; but I have already exceeded the bounds I had set when I began.

Should any one object to so short an account of him being published, I answer: A short account is better than none, (and I have seen none yet, save that about his death, and what has been in the newspapers.) Besides, hundreds can buy this account who cannot buy a larger; and short as it is, it contains the great outlines of his portrait. In fine, I had not time to publish a large volume, though I thought it right, as a son, to say something of my father in the gospel. And very few of his sons have had greater opportunities of being thoroughly acquainted with him, during the last seventeen years. I have slept with him hundreds of nights: I have travelled with him thousands of miles: I lived in what he reckoned more immediately his own family, in London and Bristol, five years together: I have conversed freely with him on a variety of subjects: I knew his opinions, his disposition, and the very secrets of his heart. Had he not discovered that he was man by a few instances of human frailty, those who knew him would have been in danger of idolatry. His life showed to what a degree of greatness man may be raised; and his death shows that the glory of virtue alone is solid and eternal. The pomp and pageantry of state, wealth, and titles of dominion have contributed to gain some the name of great. These would have been useless appendages to him. He was great in himself; great in the energy and powers of his own mind; great in the superiority and sovereignty of his soul over most other men.

In this imperfect memorial I have endeavoured to show my love to this venerable saint: now none can suspect me of flattery; but all his worth will not, cannot be known till mortality shall be swallowed up of life. The sun cannot be seen but by its own light; and when it shines, all

other lights are as darkness, compared with its transcendent effulgence. Mr. Wesley has had his day. He shone with distinguished lustre for many years. He has been a means of dispelling the darkness of ignorance and error from the minds of thousands. He has often cheered the drooping spirits of such as were ready to perish. He has, in the hands of God, revived genuine piety over this land, and made thousands fruitful in good works. But, alas! he is eclipsed for a season! and his absence causes a darkness which is most acutely felt! What a solemn scene presents itself to our view! human nature exalted almost beyond human belief, and sunk almost below human notice! But he hath left behind him proofs of his greatness, which will last till the visible creation shall be no more! Whoever reads his Works, and contemplates his character, will easily allow that his extraordinary natural powers, improved by a liberal education, and employed to their utmost extent in the service of God, for the good of mankind, are deserving of the highest praise we dare give to a mortal. His disinterested love to the poor, his unabating zeal in setting forth the Lord Jesus Christ to perishing sinners, his deep acquaintance with divine things, and his amazing labours in the church, rendered him the delight of his friends, the glory of his family, and the wonder of the age he lived in! Allow him but the unavoidable infirmities of humanity, and he was a rare ornament to the British empire, a striking pattern to all Christian ministers, and a bright exemplar of religious excellence.

The chief point in which the death of Mr. Wesley will affect the Methodist connection is, the preachers thereby lose their "centre of union." They considered themselves as his sons in the gospel, and to his direction they freely submitted. But they owe no such submission to any other man. It is therefore impossible that there should ever be another king in our Israel. But it does not follow that our union will be destroyed. The preachers never called Mr. Wesley, Rabbi, in the sense which our Lord forbids,

They never acknowledged any head of the Christian church, but Jesus Christ; and he is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." Under his gracious influence the preachers are well qualified to govern themselves. Their plan is, in part, not only fixed, but published in their enrolled deed and the minutes of the conference. It is probable they will appoint a president and a general committee every year, to act in concert during the conference only; their office and power to end with the conference. While they are assembled, they can divide the three kingdoms into districts (a given number of circuits to form a district.) They can then choose a committee out of every district, and each committee can choose its own president for the year, who can convene the committee in case of any business that cannot be done in a single circuit. Thus it will be easy to preserve our union indissoluble, and to perpetuate the itinerant plan in the good old way. That this may be the case, and that God may give us a right spirit, that with a single eye we may aim at his glory in all things, is the earnest prayer of,

The church's servant for Christ's sake,

S. BRADBURN.

SELECT LETTERS

OF

REV. JOHN WESLEY.

I.—TO HIS FATHER.

June 13, 1733.

THE effects of my last journey, I believe, will make me more cautious of staying any time from Oxford for the future; at least till I have no pupils to take care of, which probably will be within a year or two. One of my young gentlemen told me at my return, that he was more and more afraid of singularity; another, that he had read an excellent piece of Mr. Locke's, which had convinced him of the mischief of regarding authority. Both of them agreed that the observing of Wednesday as a fast was an unnecessary singularity; the catholic church (that is, the majority of it) having long since repealed, by contrary custom, the injunction she formerly gave concerning it. A third, who could not yield to this argument, has been convinced by a fever and Dr. Frewin. Our seven and twenty communicants at St. Mary's were on Monday shrunk to five; and the day before, the last of Mr. Clayton's pupils who continued with us informed me that he did not design to meet us any more.

My ill success, as they call it, seems to be what has frightened every one away from a falling house. On Sunday I was considering the matter a little more nearly, and imagined that all the ill consequences of my singularity were reducible to three,—diminution of fortune, loss of friends, and of reputation. As to my *fortune*, I well know,

though perhaps others do not, that I could not have borne a larger than I have; and as for that most plausible excuse for desiring it, "While I have so little I cannot do the good I would," I ask, Can you do the good God would have you do? It is enough! Look no farther. For *friends*, they were either trifling or serious: if triflers, fare them well; a noble escape: if serious, those who are most serious are left, whom the others would rather have opposed than forwarded in the service they have done, and still do us. If it be said, "But these may leave you too; for they are no firmer than the others were:" first, I doubt that fact; but, next, suppose they should, we hope then they would only teach us a nobler and harder lesson than they have done hitherto: "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put any confidence in man." And as for *reputation*, though it be a glorious instrument of advancing our Master's service, yet there is a better than that,—a clean heart, a single eye, a soul full of God! A fair exchange. if by the loss of reputation we can purchase the lowest degree of purity of heart! We beg my mother and you would not cease to work together with us, that, whatever we lose, we may gain this; and that, having tasted of this good gift, we may count all things else but dung and dross in comparison of it.

II.—TO HIS MOTHER.

January, 1727.

I AM shortly to take my master's degree. As I shall from that time be less interrupted by business not of my own choosing, I have drawn up for myself a scheme of studies, from which I do not intend, for some years at least, to vary. I am perfectly come over to your opinion, that there are many truths it is not worth while to know. Curiosity, indeed, might be a sufficient plea for our laying out some time upon them, if we had half a dozen centuries of life to come; but methinks it is great ill-husbandry

to spend a considerable part of the small pittance now allowed us in what makes us neither a quick nor a sure return.

Two days ago I was reading a dispute between those celebrated masters of controversy, Bishop Atterbury and Bishop Hoadly; but must own I was so injudicious as to break off in the middle. I could not conceive that the dignity of the end was at all proportioned to the difficulty of attaining it. And I thought the labour of twenty or thirty hours, if I was sure of succeeding, which I was not, would be but ill rewarded by that important piece of knowledge, whether Bishop Hoadly had misunderstood Bishop Atterbury or no.

About a year and a half ago I stole out of company at eight in the evening, with a young gentleman with whom I was intimate. As we took a turn in an aisle of St. Mary's Church, in expectation of a young lady's funeral with whom we were both acquainted, I asked him if he really thought himself my friend; and, if he did, why he would not do me all the good he could. He began to protest; in which I cut him short by desiring him to oblige me in an instance which he could not deny to be in his own power: to let me have the pleasure of making him a whole Christian, to which I knew he was at least half persuaded already; that he could not do me a greater kindness, as both of us would be fully convinced when we came to follow that young woman.

He turned exceedingly serious, and kept something of that disposition ever since. Yesterday was a fortnight he died of a consumption. I saw him three days before he died; and, on the Sunday following, did him the last good office I could here by preaching his funeral sermon, which was his desire when living.

III.—TO THE SAME.

March 19, 1727.

ONE advantage, at least, my degree has given me: I am now at liberty, and shall be in a great measure for some time, to choose my own employment. And as I believe I know my own deficiencies best, and which of them are most necessary to be supplied, I hope my time will turn to somewhat better account than when it was not so much in my own disposal.

The conversation of one or two persons, whom you may have heard me speak of, (I hope never without gratitude,) first took off my relish for most other pleasures, so far that I despised them in comparison of that. I have since proceeded a step farther,—to slight them absolutely. And I am so little at present in love with even company,—the most elegant entertainment next to books,—that, unless the persons have a religious turn of thought, I am much better pleased without them. I think it is the settled temper of my soul that I should prefer, at least for some time, such a retirement as would seclude me from all the world, to the station I am now in. Not that this is by any means unpleasant to me; but I imagine it would be more improving to be in a place where I might confirm or-implant in my mind what habits I would, without interruption, before the flexibility of youth be over.

A school in Yorkshire was proposed to me lately, on which I shall think more when it appears whether I may have it or not. A good salary is annexed to it. But what has made me wish for it most, is the frightful description, as they call it, which some gentlemen who know the place gave me of it yesterday. "It lies in a little vale, so pent up between two hills that it is scarcely accessible on any side; so that you can expect little company from without, and within there is none at all." I should therefore be entirely at liberty to converse with company of my own choosing, whom for that reason I would bring with me;

and company equally agreeable, wherever I fixed, could not put me to less expense.

“The sun that walks his airy way
To cheer the world, and bring the day;
The moon that shines with borrow'd light;
The stars that gild the gloomy night:
All of these, and all I see,
Should be sung, and sung by me.
These praise their Maker as they can,
But want and ask the tongue of man.”

I am full of business, but have found a way to write without taking any time from that. It is but rising an hour sooner in the morning, and going into company an hour later in the evening; both which may be done without any inconvenience.

IV.—TO THE SAME.

June 11, 1731.

THE motion and sun together, in our last hundred and fifty miles' walk, so thoroughly carried off all our superfluous humours that we continue perfectly in health, though it is here a very sickly season. And Mr. Kirkham assures us, on the word of a priest and a physician, that if we will but take the same medicine once or twice a year, we shall never need any other to keep us from the gout. When we were with him, we touched two or three times upon a nice subject, but did not come to any full conclusion. The point debated was, What is the meaning of being *righteous overmuch*, or by the more common phrase of being *too strict in religion*? and what danger there was of any of us falling into that extreme?

All the ways of being too righteous or too strict which we could think of, were these: either the carrying some one particular virtue to so great a height as to make it clash with some others; or the laying too much stress on the instituted means of grace, to the neglect of the weightier matters of the law; or the multiplying prudential means

upon ourselves so far, and binding ourselves to the observance of them so strictly, as to obstruct the end we aimed at by them, either by hindering our advance in heavenly affections in general, or by retarding our progress in some particular virtue. Our opponents seemed to think my brother and I [were] in some danger of being too strict in this last sense; of laying burdens on ourselves too heavy to be borne, and, consequently, too heavy to be of any use to us.

It is easy to observe that almost every one thinks that rule totally needless which he does not need himself; and as to the Christian spirit itself, almost every one calls that degree of it which he does not himself aim at, enthusiasm. If, therefore, we plead for either, (not as if we thought the former absolutely needful, neither as if we had attained the latter,) it is no great wonder that they who are not for us in practice should be against us. If you, who are a less prejudiced judge, have perceived us faulty in this matter, too superstitious or enthusiastic, or whatever it is to be called, we earnestly desire to be speedily informed of our error, that we may no longer spend our strength on that which profiteth not. Or whatever there may be, on the other hand, in which you have observed us to be too remiss, that likewise we desire to know as soon as possible. This is a subject which we would understand with as much accuracy as possible, it being hard to say which is of the worse consequence,—the being too strict, the really carrying things too far, the wearying ourselves and spending our strength in burdens that are unnecessary,—or the being frightened by those terrible words from what, if not directly necessary, would at least be useful.

V.—TO THE SAME.

February 28, 1732.

ONE consideration is enough to make me assent to his and your judgment concerning the holy sacrament, which is, that we cannot allow Christ's human nature to be pre-

sent in it without allowing either CON or TRAN-substantiation. But that his divinity is so united to us then as he never is but to worthy receivers, I firmly believe, though the manner of that union is utterly a mystery to me.

That none but worthy receivers should find this effect is not strange to me when I observe how small effect many means of improvement have upon an unprepared mind. Mr. Morgan and my brother were affected, as they ought, by the observations you made on that glorious subject; but though my understanding approved what was excellent, yet my heart did not feel it. Why was this, but because it was pre-engaged by those affections with which wisdom will not dwell? because the animal mind cannot relish those truths which are spiritually discerned? Yet I have those writings which the good Spirit gave to that end: I have many of those which he hath since assisted his servants to give us: I have retirement to apply these to my own soul daily: I have means both of public and private prayer; and, above all, of partaking in that sacrament once a week. What shall I do to make all these blessings effectual, to gain from them that mind which was also in Christ Jesus?

To all who give signs of their not being strangers to it, I propose this question,—and why not to you rather than any? Shall I quite break off my pursuit of all learning, but what immediately tends to practice? I once desired to make a fair show in languages and philosophy; but it is past: there is a more excellent way, and if I cannot attain to any progress in the one without throwing up all thoughts of the other, why fare it well! Yet a little while, and we shall all be equal in knowledge, if we are in virtue.

You say you “have renounced the world.” And what have I been doing all this time? What have I done ever since I was born? Why, I have been plunging myself into it more and more. It is enough: “Awake, thou that sleepest.” Is there not “one Lord, one Spirit, one hope of our calling?” one way of attaining that hope? Then I am to

renounce the world as well as you. That is the very thing I want to do: to draw off my affections from this world, and fix them on a better. But how? What is the surest and the shortest way? Is it not to be humble? Surely this is a large step in the way. But the question recurs, How am I to do this? To own the necessity of it, is not to be humble. In many things you have interceded for me and prevailed. Who knows but in this too you may be successful? If you can spare me only that little part of Thursday evening which you formerly bestowed upon me in another manner, I doubt not but it would be as useful now for correcting my heart as it was then for forming my judgment.

When I observe how fast life flies away, and how slow improvement comes, I think one can never be too much afraid of dying before one has learned to live: I mean, even in the course of nature. For were I sure that "the silver cord" should not be violently "loosed;" or that "the wheel" should not "be broken at the cistern," till it was quite worn away by its own motion, yet what time would this give for such a work? A moment to transact the business of eternity! What are forty years in comparison of this? So that were I sure of what never man yet was sure of, how little would it alter the case! How justly still might I cry out,—

"Downward I hasten to my destined place;
There none obtain thy aid, none sing thy praise!
Soon shall I lie in death's deep ocean drown'd;
Is mercy there, is sweet forgiveness found?
O save me yet, while on the brink I stand;
Rebuke these storms, and set me safe on land!
O make my longings and thy mercy sure!
Thou art the God of power."

VI.—TO HIS BROTHER SAMUEL.

Marienborn, near Frankfort, July 7, (O. S.,) 1738.

DEAR BROTHER,—God has given me at length the desire of my heart. I am with a church whose conversa-

tion is in heaven, in whom is the mind that was in Christ, and who so walks as he walked. As they have all one Lord and one faith, so they are all partakers of one spirit, the spirit of meekness and love, which uniformly and continually animates all their conversation. O how high and holy a thing Christianity is! and how widely distant from that (I know not what) which is so called, though it neither purifies the heart nor renews the life after the image of our blessed Redeemer.

I grieve to think how that holy name by which we are called must be blasphemed among the heathen, while they see discontented Christians, passionate Christians, resentful Christians, earthly-minded Christians; yea, (to come to what we are apt to count small things,) while they see Christians judging one another, ridiculing one another, speaking evil of one another, increasing, instead of bearing, one another's burdens. How bitterly would Julian have applied to these, "See how these Christians love one another!" I know I myself, I doubt you sometimes, and my sister often, have been under this condemnation. O may God grant we may never more think to do him service by breaking those commands which are the very life of his religion! But may we utterly put away all anger, and wrath, and malice, and bitterness, and evil speaking

I believe in a week Mr. Ingham and I shall set out for Hernhuth, about three hundred and fifty miles from hence. O pray for us, that God would sanctify to us all those precious opportunities, that we may be continually built up more and more in the spirit of power, and love, and of a sound mind!

VII.—TO THE SAME.

London, October 30, 1738.

DEAR BROTHER,—With regard to my own character and my doctrine likewise, I shall answer you very plainly. By a Christian, I mean one who so believes in Christ as

that sin hath no more dominion over him : and in this obvious sense of the word, I was not a Christian till May the 24th, last past. For till then sin had the dominion over me, although I fought with it continually ; but surely, then, from that time to this it hath not ;—such is the free grace of God in Christ. What sins they were which till then reigned over me, and from which, by the grace of God, I am now free, I am ready to declare on the house-top, if it may be for the glory of God.

If you ask by what means I am made free, (though not perfect, neither infallibly sure of my perseverance,) I answer, By faith in Christ ; by such a sort or degree of faith as I had not till that day. My desire of this faith I knew long before, though not so clearly till Sunday, January the 8th last, when being in the midst of the great deep, I wrote a few lines, in the bitterness of my soul, some of which I have transcribed ; and may the good God sanctify them both to you and me !

By the most infallible of all proofs, inward feeling, I am convinced,

1. Of unbelief ; having no such faith in Christ as will prevent my heart's being troubled ; which it could not be if I believed in God, and rightly believed also in him.

2. Of pride throughout my life past ; inasmuch as I thought I had what I find I had not. Lord, save, or I perish ! Save me,

(1.) By such a faith in thee and in thy Christ as implies trust, confidence, peace in life and in death.

(2.) By such humility as may fill my heart, from this hour for ever, with a piercing, uninterrupted sense, *Nihil est quod hactenus feci* ;* having evidently built without a foundation.

(3.) By such a recollection, that I may cry to thee every moment, but more especially when all is calm, (if it should so please thee,) “ Give me faith, or I die ! Give me a lowly

* What I have been hitherto doing amounts to nothing.—ED.

spirit, otherwise, *mihi non sit suave vivere.*”* Amen! Come, Lord Jesus! *Υιε Δαβιδ, ελεησον μου.*†

Some measure of this faith, which bringeth salvation, or victory over sin, and which implies peace, and trust in God through Christ, I now enjoy by his free mercy; though in very deed it is in me but as a grain of mustard seed: for the *πληροφορια πιεσεως*,—the seal of the Spirit, the love of God shed abroad in my heart, and producing joy in the Holy Ghost, “joy which no man taketh away; joy unspeakable and full of glory:” this witness of the Spirit I have not, but I patiently wait for it. I know many who have already received it; more than one or two in the very hour we were praying for it. And having seen and spoken with a cloud of witnesses abroad, as well as in my own country, I cannot doubt but that believers who wait and pray for it will find these scriptures fulfilled in themselves. My hope is, that they will be fulfilled in me: I build on Christ the Rock of Ages; on his sure mercies described in his word, and on his promises, all which I know are yea, and amen. Those who have not yet received joy in the Holy Ghost, the love of God, and the plerophory of faith, (any or all of which I take to be the witness of the Spirit with our spirit that we are the sons of God,) I believe to be Christians in that imperfect sense wherein I may call myself such; and I exhort them to pray that God would give them also “to rejoice in hope of the glory of God,” and to feel “his love shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto them.”

O brother, would to God you would leave disputing concerning the things which you know not, (if indeed you know them not,) and beg of God to fill up what is yet wanting in you! Why should not you also seek till you receive “that peace of God which passeth all understanding?” Who shall hinder you, notwithstanding the manifold temptations, from “rejoicing with joy unspeakable, by rea-

* May life itself no longer be pleasant to me.—Ed.

† Son of David, have mercy upon me.—Ed.

son of glory?" Amen! Lord Jesus! May you, and all who are near of kin to you, (if you have it not already,) feel his love shed abroad in your heart by his Spirit which dwelleth in you; and be sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of your inheritance.

VIII.—TO THE REV. WILLIAM LAW.

May 14, 1738.

REVEREND SIR,—It is in obedience to what I think to be the call of God, that I, who have the sentence of death in my own soul, take upon me to write to you, of whom I have often desired to learn the first elements of the gospel of Christ.

If you are born of God, you will approve of the design, though it may be but weakly executed. If not, I shall grieve for you, not for myself. For as I seek not the praise of men, so neither regard I the contempt either of you or of any other.

For two years (more especially) I have been preaching after the model of your two practical treatises; and all that heard have allowed that the law is great, wonderful, and holy. But no sooner did they attempt to fulfil it, but they found that it is too high for man; and that by doing "the works of the law shall no flesh living be justified."

To remedy this, I exhorted them, and stirred up myself, to pray earnestly for the grace of God, and to use all the other means of obtaining that grace, which the all-wise God hath appointed. But still, both they and I, were more and more convinced that this is a law by which a man cannot live; the law in our members continually warring against it, and bringing us into deeper captivity to the law of sin.

Under this heavy yoke I might have groaned till death, had not a holy man, to whom God lately directed me, upon my complaining thereof, answered at once, "Believe, and thou shalt be saved. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ

with all thy heart, and nothing shall be impossible to thee. This faith, indeed, as well as the salvation it brings, is the free gift of God. But seek, and thou shalt find. Strip thyself naked of thy own works, and thy own righteousness, and fly to him. For whosoever cometh unto him he will in nowise cast out."

Now, sir, suffer me to ask, How will you answer it to our common Lord, that you never gave me this advice? Did you never read the Acts of the Apostles, or the answer of Paul to him who said, "What must I do to be saved?" Or are you wiser than he? Why did I scarce ever hear you name the name of Christ? never, so as to ground any thing upon "faith in his blood?" Who is this who is laying another foundation? If you say you advised other things as preparatory to this, what is this but laying a foundation below the foundation? Is not Christ then the first as well as the last? If you say you advised them because you knew that I had faith already, verily you knew nothing of me; you discerned not my spirit at all. I know that I had not faith, unless the faith of a devil, the faith of Judas, that speculative, notional, airy shadow which lives in the head, not in the heart. But what is this to the living, justifying faith in the blood of Jesus? the faith that cleanseth from sin; that gives us to have free access to the Father; to "rejoice in hope of the glory of God;" to have "the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost" which dwelleth in us; and "the Spirit itself bearing witness with our spirit that we are the children of God?"

I beseech you, sir, by the mercies of God, to consider deeply and impartially whether the true reason of your never pressing this upon me was not this,—that you had it not yourself? whether that man of God was not in the right who gave this account of a late interview he had with you?—"I began speaking to him of faith in Christ. He was silent. Then he began to speak of mystical matters. I spake to him of faith in Christ again. He was silent.

Then he began to speak of mystical matters again. I saw his state at once." And a very dangerous one in his judgment, whom I know to have the Spirit of God.

Once more, sir, let me beg you to consider whether your extreme roughness, and morose and sour behaviour, at least on many occasions, can possibly be the fruit of a living faith in Christ? If not, may the God of peace and love fill up what is yet wanting in you!

IX.—TO COUNT ZINZENDORF, AT MARIENBORN.

MAY our gracious Lord, who counteth whatsoever is done to the least of his brethren as done to himself, return sevenfold to you and the countess, and to all the brethren, the kindnesses you did to us! It would have been a great satisfaction to me, if I could have spent more time with the Christians who love one another. But that could not be now, my Master having called me to work in another part of his vineyard. Nor did I return hither at all before the time; for though a great door and effectual had been opened, the adversaries had laid so many stumbling-blocks before it that the weak were daily turned out of the way. Numberless misunderstandings had arisen, by means of which the way of truth was much blasphemed: and thence had sprung anger, clamour, bitterness, evil-speaking, envyings, strifes, railings, evil surmises, whereby the enemy had gained such an advantage over the little flock that "of the rest durst no man join himself to them."

But it has now pleased our blessed Master to remove, in great measure, these rocks of offence. The word of the Lord again runs and is glorified, and his work goes on and prospers. Great multitudes are everywhere awakened, and cry out, "What must we do to be saved?" Many of them see that there is only one name under heaven whereby they can be saved, and more and more of those who seek it find salvation in his name, and these are of one heart and one soul. They all love one another, and

are knit together in one body and one spirit, as in one faith and one hope of their calling. The love and zeal of our brethren in Holland and Germany, particularly at Hernhuth, has stirred up many among us, who will not be comforted till they also partake of the great and precious promises. I hope, if God permit, to see them at least once more, were it only to give them the fruit of my love, the speaking freely on a few things which I did not approve, perhaps because I did not understand them. May our merciful Lord give you a right judgment in all things, and make you to abound more and more in all lowliness and meekness, in all simplicity and godly sincerity, in all watchfulness and seriousness; in a word, in all faith and love, particularly to those that are without, till you are merciful, as your Father which is in heaven is merciful! I desire your constant and earnest prayers that he would vouchsafe me a portion of the same spirit.

X.—TO THE CHURCH OF GOD WHICH IS IN HERNHUTH, *John Wesley, an unworthy Presbyter of the Church of God in England, wisheth all grace and peace in our Lord Jesus Christ.*

October 14, 1738.

GLORY be to God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for his unspeakable gift! for giving me to be an eye-witness of your faith, and love, and holy conversation in Christ Jesus! I have borne testimony thereof with all plainness of speech, in many parts of Germany, and thanks have been given to God by many on your behalf.

We are endeavouring here also, by the grace which is given us, to be followers of you, as ye are of Christ. Fourteen were added to us since our return, so that we have now eight bands of men, consisting of fifty-six persons, all of whom seek for salvation only in the blood of Christ. As yet we have only two small bands of women; the one of three, the other of five persons. But here are many others who only wait till we have leisure to instruct

them how they may most effectually build up one another in the faith and love of Him who gave himself for them.

Though my brother and I are not permitted to preach in most of the churches in London, yet (thanks be to God!) there are others left, wherein we have liberty to speak the truth as it is in Jesus. Likewise every evening, and on set evenings in the week at two several places, we publish the word of reconciliation, sometimes to twenty or thirty, sometimes to fifty or sixty, sometimes to three or four hundred persons met together to hear it. We begin and end all our meetings with singing and prayer; and we know that our Lord heareth our prayer, having more than once or twice (and this was not done in a corner) received our petitions in that very hour.

Nor hath he left himself without other witnesses of his grace and truth. Ten ministers I know now in England, who lay the right foundation, "The blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin." Over and above whom I have found one Anabaptist, and one, if not two, of the teachers among the Presbyterians here, who, I hope, love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and teach the way of God in truth.

O cease not, ye that are highly favoured, to beseech our Lord that he would be with us even to the end; to remove that which is displeasing in his sight, to support that which is weak among us, to give us the whole mind that was in him, and teach us to walk even as he walked! And may the very God of peace fill up what is wanting in your faith and build you up more and more in all lowliness of mind, in all plainness of speech, in all zeal and watchfulness; that he may present you to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that ye may be holy and unblameable in the day of his appearing.

XI.—TO MR. EBENEZER BLACKWELL.

York, May 16, 1753.

DEAR SIR,—For some time I have had a desire to send you a few lines. I have often observed, with a sensible

pleasure, your strong desires to be, not almost only, but altogether, a Christian. And what should hinder it? What is it that prevents those good desires from being brought to good effect? Is it the carrying a right principle too far? I mean, a desire to please all men for their good? Or is it a kind of shame? the being ashamed, not of sin, but of holiness, or of what conduces thereto? I have often been afraid lest this should hurt you. I have been afraid that you do not gain ground in this respect; nay, that you rather go backward, by yielding to this, than forward, by conquering it. I have feared that you are not so bold for God now, as you was four or five years ago. If so, you are certainly in great danger. For in this case, who knows where he shall stop? The giving way in one point naturally leads us to give way in another and another, till we give up all. O sir, let us beware of this! Whereunto we have attained, let us hold fast. But this can only be, by pressing on. Otherwise, we must go back. You have need of courage and steady resolution; for you have a thousand enemies: the flattering, frowning world; the rulers of the darkness of this world; and the grand enemy within. What need have you to put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day? I often tremble for you. And how few will honestly and plainly tell you of your danger! O may God warn you continually by his inward voice, and with every temptation make a way for you to escape!

My wife joins me in wishing all blessing both to Mrs. Blackwell and you.

XII.—TO THE SAME.

Birstal, May 28, 1753.

DEAR SIR,—Your speaking so freely encourages me to write once more. Ever since I had the pleasure of knowing you, I have observed in you a real desire to please God, and to have a conscience void of offence. But, at

the same time, I have observed you had many enemies. Perhaps one was a natural cheerfulness of temper, which, though in itself it be highly desirable, yet may easily slide into an extreme. And in this case we know too well it may hurt us extremely. It may be, another hinderance in your way has sometimes been a kind of shame, which prevented your executing good and commendable designs. Was it not owing to this that you, who had received such blessings by means of field-preaching, grew unwilling to attend it? But is there any end of giving way to this enemy? Will it not encroach upon us more and more? I have sometimes been afraid that you have not gained ground in this respect for these two or three years. But the comfort is, that in a moment God can repair whatever is decayed in our souls, and supply whatever is wanting. What is too hard for him? Nothing but our own will. Let us give up this, and he will not withhold from us any manner of thing that is good.

I believe the harvest has not been so plenteous for many years as it is now in all the north of England; but the labourers are few. I wish you could persuade our friend to share the labour with me. One of us should in anywise visit both the north and Ireland every year. But I cannot do both; the time will not suffice; otherwise I should not spare myself. I hope my life, rather than my tongue, says, I desire only to spend, and to be spent, in the work. Our love and service always attend Mrs. Blackwell and you.

I am, dear sir,

Your very affectionate servant.

XIII.—TO THE SAME.

Bristol, September 24, 1754.

DEAR SIR,—Although I hope to see you in about a fortnight, yet I could not be satisfied without sending you a few lines first. Since I left London, I have had many thoughts concerning you, and sometimes uneasy ones. I

have been jealous over you, lest you should not duly improve the numerous talents with which God has intrusted you; nay, I have been afraid lest your very desire of improving them should grow weaker, rather than stronger. If so, by what means is it to be accounted for? What has occasioned this feebleness of mind? May it not partly be occasioned by your conversing more than is necessary (for so far as it is necessary it does not hurt us) with men that are without God in the world; that love, think, talk of earthly things only? partly by your giving way to a false shame, (and that in several instances,) which the more you indulge, it increases the more? and partly by allowing too large a place in your thoughts and affections, even to so innocent an enjoyment as that of a garden? If this leaves you fewer opportunities of hearing the word which is able to save your soul, may not you even hereby grieve the Holy Spirit, and be more a loser than you are sensible of? I know both Mrs. Blackwell and you desire to please God in all things. You will, therefore, I know, receive these hints as they are intended; not as a mark of disesteem, but rather of the sincerity with which

I am, dear sir,

Your ever affectionate servant.

XIV.—TO THE SAME.

Redruth, August 31, 1755.

DEAR SIR,—Experience confirms your advice both ways. In my last journey into the north, all my patience was put to the proof again and again; and all my endeavour to please, yet without success. In my present journey I leap, as broke from chains. I am content with whatever entertainment I meet with; and my companions are always in good humour, “because they are with me.” This must be the spirit of all who take journeys with me. If a dinner ill dressed, a hard bed, a poor room, a shower of rain, or a dirty road will put them out of humour, it lays

a burden upon me greater than all the rest put together. By the grace of God, I never fret. I repine at nothing; I am discontented with nothing. And to have persons at my ear fretting and murmuring at every thing, is like tearing the flesh off my bones. I see God sitting upon his throne, and ruling all things well. Although, therefore, I can bear this also,—to hear his government of the world continually found fault with; (for in blaming the things which he alone can alter, we, in effect, blame him;) yet it is such a burden to me as I cannot bear without pain; and I bless God when it is removed.

The doctrine of a particular providence is what exceeding few persons understand, at least not practically, so as to apply it to every circumstance of life. This I want, to see God acting in every thing, and disposing all for his own glory, and his creature's good. I hope it is your continual prayer, that you may see him, and love him, and glorify him with all you are and all you have. Peace be with you all.

I am, dear sir,

Your affectionate servant.

XV.—TO THE SAME.

Bradford, July 16, 1761.

DEAR SIR,—Methinks it is a long time since I saw or heard any thing of you. I hope, however, that Mrs. Blackwell and you are not only alive, but more alive than ever; seeking and enjoying something more than King George is likely to find either at his wedding or his coronation. And can you likewise give me a comfortable account of Miss Freeman, both as to her health and her spirit? I often think of her, and sometimes have a mind to send her another letter, though she is one in my debt already.

Mr. Venn was so kind as to come over hither yesterday, and spend the evening with us. I am a little embarrassed

on his account, and hardly know how to act. Several years before he came to Huddersfield, some of our preachers went thither, carrying their lives in their hands, and with great difficulty established a little, earnest society. These eagerly desire them to preach there still; not in opposition to Mr. Venn, (whom they love, esteem, and constantly attend,) but to supply what *they* do not find in his preaching. It is a tender point. Where there is a gospel ministry *already* we do not desire to preach; but whether we can leave off preaching because such a one comes *after*, is another question; especially when those who were awakened and convinced by us beg and require the continuance of our assistance. I love peace, and follow it; but whether I am at liberty to purchase it at such a price, I really cannot tell.

I hear poor Mr. Walker is near death. It seems strange that, when there is so great a want of faithful labourers, such as him should be removed. But the will of God is always best, and what he does we shall know hereafter! I have been for some days with Mr. Grimshaw, an Israelite indeed. A few such as him would make a nation tremble. He carries fire wherever he goes. Mr. Venn informs me that Mr. Whitefield continues very weak. I was in hope, when he wrote to me lately, that he was swiftly recovering strength. Perhaps, sir, you can send me better news concerning him? What need have we, while we do live, to live in earnest!

XVI.—TO THE SAME.

Liverpool, July 14, 1764.

DEAR SIR,—My brother informs me that you have been so extremely ill that your life was hardly expected. I really am under apprehensions lest that chariot should cost you your life. If, after having been accustomed to ride on horseback for many years, you should now exchange a horse for a carriage, it cannot be that you should have good

health. It is a vain thing to expect it. I judge of your case by my own. I must be on horseback for life, if I would be healthy. Now and then, indeed, if I could afford it, I should rest myself for fifty miles in a chaise ; but without riding near as much as I do now, I must never look for health.

In the meantime I trust both Mrs. Blackwell and you are looking for health of a nobler kind. You look to be filled with the spirit of love and of a healthful mind. What avails every thing else ? every thing that passes away as an arrow through the air ?

“The arrow is flown ! The moment is gone !
The millennial year
Rushes on to the view, and eternity's here !”

You want nothing more of this world. You have enough, and, by the peculiar blessing of God, know you have. But you want a thousand times more faith. You want love ; you want holiness. The Lord God supply all your wants from the riches of his mercy in Christ Jesus !

XVII.—TO MISS FURLY, AFTERWARD MRS. DOWNES.

December 22, 1756.

It is a happy thing, if we can learn obedience by the things which we suffer. Weakness of body, and heaviness of mind, will, I trust, have this good effect upon you. The particular lesson which you have now to learn is, to be faithful in comparatively little things, particularly in conversation. God hath given you a tongue : why ? That you may praise him therewith ; that all your conversation may be, for the time to come, “meet to minister grace to the hearers.” Such conversation and private prayer exceedingly assist each other. By resolutely persisting, according to your little strength, in all works of piety and mercy, you are waiting on God in the old Scriptural way. And therein he will come and save you. Do not think he

is afar off. He is nigh that justifieth, that sanctifieth. Beware you do not thrust him away from you. Rather say,—

“My heart would now receive thee, Lord :
Come in, my Lord, come in!”

Write as often, and as freely and fully, as you please to
Your affectionate brother and servant.

XVIII.—TO THE SAME.

Bristol, May 18, 1757.

THE great point is, to pick out in Bristol, as in all places, such acquaintance as have a deep fear of God, a continual consciousness of his presence, and a strong thirst after his whole image. Such I take most of the leaders of bands to be, and such are many of the poor in the society; but extremely few of the rich or honourable Methodists are of that number. My dear sister, I have been in pain for you on their account. When I talked with you last, you could relish the simplicity of the gospel: you were athirst for all the mind that was in Christ, and wanted to walk just as he walked. O let none persuade you, either by example or advice, to make any, the least, deviation from that good way. Make no abatement: do not soften the plain, rough gospel: do not

“Measure back your steps to earth again.”

Be not, either inwardly or outwardly, conformed to this world; but be a Christian altogether.

Health you shall have, if health be best. And He that gives it will give a blessing with it; an increase of spiritual as well as of bodily strength: but it is strength to labour, not to sit still. And this strength will either increase or decrease, in the same proportion with your sense of his love. You may lose this sense either, 1. By committing sin; or, 2. By omitting duty; or, 3. By giving way to pride, anger, or any other inward sin; or, 4. By not

watching unto prayer ; by yielding to indolence, or spiritual sloth. But it is no more necessary that we should ever lose it than it is necessary we should omit duty or commit sin. Mr. Law, therefore, speaking on this head, betrays deep ignorance both of the Scripture and the inward work of God. You are more liable to receive hurt from his late writings than from any others which I know. I shall write to Sammy this morning. It would not have been amiss if you had spoken freely to me concerning him. Why should not you, now you have, in some measure, broke that natural shyness, speak all that is in your heart to,

Dear Miss Furly,
Your truly affectionate friend and brother.

XIX.—TO THE SAME.

Newcastle-upon-Tyne, June 14, 1757.

You have reason to praise God for what he has done, and to expect all that he has promised. Indeed, if it were required that you should work this in yourself, your impotence might be a bar to your expectations ; and so might your unworthiness, if God required any merit of yours, in order to his working in you. But what impotence in you can be a bar to the almighty power of God ? And what unworthiness can hinder the free love of God ? his love in and through Christ Jesus ? So that all the promises lie fair before you. The land flowing with milk and honey, the Canaan of his perfect love, is open. Believe, and enter in !

It is an observation of one of the ancients, that it is far easier not to desire praise than not to be pleased with it. A bare conviction that it is, generally speaking, deadly poison, may prevent our desiring it ; but nothing less than humble love filling the heart will prevent our being pleased with it ; for the sense of honour is as natural to man as the sense of tasting or feeling. But when that which is spi-

ritual is fully come, this which is corrupt naturally shall be done away.

Whatever enemies you have, it is enough that you have a Friend who is mightier than them all. O let him reign in your heart alone!

XX.—TO THE SAME.

June 18, 1757.

I AM the more jealous over you, because I know you are liable to be much influenced by fair words, especially when they are spoken by persons of sense, and in an agreeable manner. And flesh and blood are powerful advocates for conformity to the world, particularly in little things. But, blessed be God, we have an unction from the Holy One, ready to teach us of all things. O let us attend to this inward teaching, which indeed is always consonant with the word. Then the word, applied by the Spirit, shall be a light in all our ways, and a lamp in all our paths.

Fight on, and conquer! Change of place, as you observe, is but a little thing. But God has, in some measure, changed your heart, wherein you have great reason to rejoice. And, having received the first-fruits of the Spirit, righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, patiently and earnestly wait for the great change, whereby every root of bitterness may be torn up.

You may profitably converse with even those honourable Christians, if you watch and pray that they do not infect you, 1. With mystical notions, which stand in full opposition to plain old Bible divinity; or, 2. With their odd, senseless jargon of a catholic spirit, whereby they have themselves suffered great loss. The spirit of the world, I think, you are aware of already; and indeed there is danger in every approach to it.

I have heard from both Mrs. Gaussen and Miss Bosanquet. There is a poor, queer old woman in Bristol (if she

is not gone to paradise) with whom it might do you good to talk. John Jones knows her. Her name is Elizabeth Edgecomb. Peace be with your spirit.

XXI.—TO THE SAME.

York, July 1, 1757.

DEAR MISS FURLY,—I cannot write to you now so fully as I would; but I must send a few lines. Mere temptation certainly does not weaken, without yielding to temptation. Yet a heaviness and soreness may remain upon the spirit till there is a fresh discovery of the love of God.

A jealous fear of offending God is good. But what have you to do with any other fear? Let love cast it all out, and at the same time make you tenfold more afraid of doing any thing, small or great, which you cannot offer up as a holy sacrifice, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

All who are without this fear (and much more all who call it legal—who revile the precious gift of God, and think it a hinderance to “the growing up in Christ”) are Antinomians in the inmost soul. Come not into their secret, my dear Miss Furly; but pray for more and more of that “legal spirit,” and you will more and more rejoice

Your affectionate servant.

XXII.—TO THE SAME.

Tremeneare, September 6, 1757.

WHY you should be afraid on account of any thing you said to me, I do not know. Certainly if you had said whatever was in your heart, it might have been a means of lessening your burden, and not of increasing it. I believe you have often a desire, and almost a resolution, of saying a great deal to me; but when you come to write or speak, your heart fails. Why should it? Why should you repress yourself? I should not despise, but love you

for your openness. It is the fruit and the proof of an honest heart. I know you are weak; I know a little of your particular weaknesses. But so much the more am I concerned for you, as a tender, sickly flower. Away then with this reserve: it answers no end, but to trouble and embarrass you. Tell me, freely and plainly, any difficulty you meet with; any enemy against whom you want help. Use me as a friend, as I hope you will use sister Crosby, and you will find it a blessing to your soul. It will again bring the promise of holiness near; which indeed always seems to be far off when we give way to any known sin; when we any way grieve the Spirit of God. There may be some rare cases wherein God has determined not to bestow his perfect love till a little before death; but this I believe is uncommon: he does not usually put off the fulfilling of his promises. Seek, and you shall find; seek earnestly, and you shall find speedily. Lift up the hands that hang down; deny yourself; take up your cross, whether that of meeting your class, or any other. Fight on, and victory is at hand!

XXIII.—TO THE SAME.

St. Austle, Cornwall, September 25, 1757.

MY DEAR SISTER,—It is a rule with me to take nothing ill that is well meant: therefore you have no need ever to be afraid of my putting an ill construction on any thing you say; for I know you mean only to save your soul. In most genteel religious people there is so strange a mixture that I have seldom much confidence in them. I love the poor; in many of them I find pure, genuine grace, unmixed with paint, folly, and affectation. But I think Mrs. Gaussen is upright of heart, and perhaps you may find one or two gentlewomen like her.

It is plain God sees it best for you frequently to walk in a thorny path. By this means he aims at destroying your pride of heart, and breaking your stubborn will. You

have had large experience that there is no substantial or lasting happiness but in him. O be true to yourself, and to your own experience! Do not seek it where it cannot be found. Hew out to yourself no more broken cisterns; but let all the springs of your happiness be in him.

You cannot be too careful to keep out of the way of any thing that has been the occasion of sin. And it is very possible to show civility and moderate respect to any person, without coming in the way of danger. All private conversation may be avoided, and ought to be, at all hazards. Do not run yourself into temptation; and God will deliver you from evil.

Nature and the devil will always oppose private prayer; but it is worth while to break through. That it is a cross will not hinder its being a blessing; nay, often the more reluctance, the greater blessing.

I think it was not you who advised poor Sam to be a mere regular clergyman, unconnected with the Methodists. Certainly this is the best way to preferment; but it is not the best way to heaven, or to do good upon earth. When it is too late, the awakened clergy will probably see this.

XXIV.—TO THE SAME.

Bristol, October 21, 1757.

MY DEAR SISTER,—God will do his own work in his own manner, and exceeding variously in different persons. It matters not whether it be wrought in a more pleasing or painful manner, so it is wrought; so nature is subdued, pride and self-will dethroned, and the will of God done in us and by us. Therefore trouble not yourself about the experience of others. God knows you, and let him do with you as he sees best.

I judge your late distress to be partly the effect of disease, but chiefly preternatural. In the third Journal there is a case nearly parallel; only the symptoms were more severe. For, in a moment, Lucretia Smith felt such a

cloud spread over her that she could not believe there was a God, or an after state. You did right to pray, as you could pray; and this is the best method which can be taken in heaviness or darkness of any kind. Then, if sin be the cause, it will be discovered. But take care that you do not refuse any help; even rough speakers may be of service. Only spread what they say before the Lord, and he will turn it to good.

XXV.—TO THE SAME.

Lewisham, February 9, 1758.

UNDOUBTEDLY you may arise now, and receive power from on high. You are hindered chiefly by not understanding the freeness of the gift of God. You are perpetually seeking for something in yourself to move him to love and bless you. But it is not to be found there; it is in himself, and in the Son of his love. He did then give you a proof of this in that fresh evidence of pardon; and he is ready to give it you again to-day; for he is not weary of well-doing. But even after this, you may or you may not use the power which attends that peace. And if you ask for more power, it shall be given you; for you have an Advocate with the Father. O cast yourself upon him; learn more of that lesson,—

“Thy salvation to obtain,
Out of myself I go:
Freely thou must heal my pain,
Thy unbought mercy show.”

How much of it may you find in this hour! Look up, and see redemption near!

XXVI.—TO THE SAME.

Dublin, April 13, 1758.

BUT if you find such a surprising alteration at Bonner's Hall, what need have you of removing to Bristol? Per-

haps a lodging there might answer the purpose of health full as well as one at Clifton; and the purpose of religion considerably better. There are few in that neighbourhood from whom I should hope you would receive much profit, except Sarah Ryan. If she abides in her integrity, she is a jewel indeed; one whose equal I have not yet found in England.

You ought not to drink much tea; and none without pretty much cream (not milk) and sugar. But I believe, were you to drink nettle-tea for a few mornings, it would do you more good than any other. It seems best for you to have frequent returns of weakness; it may be needful to fix seriousness upon your spirit, by a lasting impression that there is but one step between you and eternity. But sickness alone will not do this; no, nor even the near approach of death. Unless the Spirit of God sanctify both, a man may laugh and trifle with his last breath.

You will overcome trifling conversation, and the fear of man, not by yielding, but by fighting. This is a cross which you cannot be excused from taking up: bear it, and it will bear you. By prayer you will receive power so to do—to be a good soldier of Jesus Christ. But it is more difficult to resist hurtful desire: I am most afraid you should give way to this. Herein you have need of all the power of God. O stand fast! Look up, and receive strength! I shall be glad to hear that you are more than conqueror, and that you daily grow in the vital knowledge of Christ. Peace be with your spirit.

XXVII.—TO THE SAME.

December 28, 1758.

MY DEAR SISTER,—I thought it long since I heard from you; but I imputed it to your illness. And I did not desire you should do any thing which would put you to pain, or increase your bodily weakness.

When you seemed confident of receiving the promise in

a few days, I did not judge it needful to say any thing to the contrary; both because I was persuaded that expectation would be a quickening to your soul, and because I knew you had one near you who was able to advise you in any emergency. See that your desires do not cool, and you shall not be ashamed of this confident expectation. So long as it is tempered with resignation, it can do you no disservice. And what else is there worthy of a desire? Health you shall have, if health be best, even bodily health. But what is that in comparison of a healthful mind? And this you are sure to have.

I scruple S. R.'s drinking tar-water, because it is so extremely nauseous. Neither will it generally profit, unless stewed prunes be taken every second or third night instead of it. I rather wish she would resume the medicine I formerly prescribed; only taking care not to catch cold with it.

XXVIII.—TO THE SAME.

Norwich, March 6, 1759.

MY DEAR SISTER,—I shall always be glad to hear from you, when you can write without hurting yourself. But I am almost afraid to write, for fear of tempting you to answer whether you can or not.

Since you left Kingswood, I hope you use the water at the Hot-Wells as often as possible. If any thing medicinal profit you, probably it will be this. But perhaps God will not suffer you to be healed by outward medicines. It may be, he is determined to have all the glory of his own work. Meantime, he designs, by this weakness of body, to keep your soul low, as a weaned child. There is a wonderful mystery in the manner and circumstances of that mighty working, whereby he subdues all things to himself, and leaves nothing in the heart but his pure love alone.

I have no doubt but God will give you the answer to that prayer,—

“Let me thy witness live,
When sin is all destroy'd!
And then my spotless soul receive,
And take me home to God!”

XXIX.—TO THE SAME.

London, August 19, 1759.

MY DEAR SISTER,—The observing that rule might prevent abundance of mischief: I wish others would observe it as well as you. Thomas Walsh was a good and a wise man; yet there were some circumstances not commonly known, which easily account for the darkness he went through before he went to paradise.

I hope you have talked with Cornelius Bastable, as well as heard him preach. He is an uncommon monument of the power of grace; strengthening the understanding, as well as renewing the heart. For, so weak a head, and so bad a temper, as he once had, I do not know among all our preachers.

Probably the difference between you and others lies in words chiefly. All who expect to be sanctified at all, expect to be sanctified by faith. But, meantime, they know that faith will not be given but to them that obey. Remotely, therefore, the blessing depends on our works; although immediately, on simple faith.

Enjoy, while you may, the advantage which I had once, and shall have again, when God sees best.

XXX.—TO THE SAME.

Athlone, June 1, 1760.

MY DEAR SISTER,—I am persuaded it is not a little thing which will make me angry at you. I hope your thinking evil of me would not; for you may have many reasons so to do.

Try : perhaps by prayer and a little resolution you may avoid hearing those disputes about holiness. It implies no more than this : if John Jones, or any other, begins a discourse concerning the errors or sins of absent persons, tell him, "I beg you would say no more on this head : I dare not, and I will not hear, unless those persons were present." If one begins any caution of that kind, stop him, only with mildness and good humour. Say, "I believe you speak out of kindness, but I must not hear ; it both distresses and hurts my soul : therefore if you really wish my welfare be silent, or let us call another cause." Where you see good you may add, "I consulted Mr. Wesley on this head ; and this was the advice he gave me."

No one ever "walked in the light as God is in the light," (I mean, in the full sense of the expression,) till "the blood of Jesus Christ had cleansed him from all sin." "If we are perfectly saved, it is through his blood." This is the plain meaning of the text : and it may be fulfilled in you before you sleep. God is sovereign, in sanctifying as well as justifying. He will act when, as well as how, he pleases ; and none can say unto him, What doest thou ?

When the lungs are ulcerated, cold bathing not only does no hurt, but is the most probable cure. Sammy is a letter in my debt. I do not know but he is providentially called to this kingdom. I have now finished more than half my progress, having gone through two of the four provinces. Who knows whether I shall live to go through the other two ? It matters not how long we live, but how well.

XXXI.—TO THE SAME.

Norwich, January 18, 1761.

MY DEAR SISTER,—I have sometimes wondered that not one of all the clergymen we have known should ever cleave to me for God's sake ; nor one man of learning,

which would ease me exceedingly. Tommy Walsh designed it,—

“But death had quicker wings than love.”

Perhaps it was not best, because I am so immeasurably apt to pour out all my soul into any that love me.

It is well for sister Clarke that she is landed safe. And it is well for us, who are still amid the waves, that He is with us whom the winds and the seas obey. He is steering you to the haven where you would be. You may well trust your soul with him, and let him do with you as seemeth him good.

Certainly nothing can be of greater importance than the behaviour both of those who are renewed, and of those who are known to be pressing after it. You have need to weigh every step you take. When and where do you meet now? And who are they that meet? Pray send the enclosed, to your neighbour, and let all of you love and pray for

Your affectionate brother.

XXXII.—TO THE SAME.

St. Ives, September 15, 1762.

MY DEAR SISTER,—Whereunto you have attained, hold fast. But expect that greater things are at hand, although our friend talks as if you were not to expect them till the article of death.

Certainly sanctification (in the proper sense) is “an instantaneous deliverance from all sin;” and includes “an instantaneous power then given, always to cleave to God.” Yet this sanctification (at least, in the lower degrees) does not include a power never to think a useless thought, nor ever speak a useless word. I myself believe that such a perfection is inconsistent with living in a corruptible body: for this makes it impossible “always to think right.” While we breathe we shall, more or less, mistake. If

therefore, Christian perfection implies this, we must not expect it till after death.

I want you to be all love. This is the perfection I believe and teach. And this perfection is consistent with a thousand nervous disorders, which that high-strained perfection is not. Indeed, my judgment is, that (in this case particularly) to overdo is to undo; and that to set perfection too high (so high as no man that we ever heard or read of attained) is the most effectual (because unsuspected) way of driving it out of the world.

Take care you are not hurt by any thing in the "Short Hymns" contrary to the doctrines you have long received. Peace be with your spirit!

XXXIII.—TO THE SAME.

London, July 16, 1763:

MY DEAR SISTER,—1. So far as I know what will make me most holy and most useful, I know what is the will of God.

2. Certainly it is possible for persons to be as devoted to God in a married as in a single state.

3. I believe John Downes is thoroughly desirous of being wholly devoted to God; and that, if you alter your condition at all, you cannot choose a more proper person.

XXXIV.—TO THE SAME.

Lewisham, December 15, 1763:

MY DEAR SISTER,—It has seemed to me, for some time, that God will not suffer Cornelius Bastable to live at Cork. He may starve there, but he cannot live. The people are not worthy of him.

Salvation from sin is a deeper and higher work than either you or Sarah Ryan can conceive. But do not imagine (as we are continually prone to do) that it lies in an indivisible point. You experienced a taste of it when you

were justified: you since experienced the thing itself, only in a low degree; and God gave you his Spirit, that you might know the things which he had freely given you. Hold fast the beginning of your confidence steadfast unto the end. You are continually apt to throw away what you have for what you want. However, you are right in looking for a farther instantaneous change, as well as a constant gradual one. But it is not good for you to be quite alone; you should converse frequently, as well as freely, with Miss Johnson, and any other that is much alive. You have great need of this.

XXXV.—TO THE SAME.

Edinburgh, May 28, 1764.

MY DEAR SISTER,—Certainly it would be right to spend some time in setting down both the outward providences of God, and the inward leadings and workings of his Spirit, as far as you can remember them. But observe withal, you are called to be a good steward of the mammon of unrighteousness. You must therefore think of this too in its place; only without anxiety. Otherwise, that neglect of your calling will hinder the work of God in your heart. You are not serving mammon by this, but serving Christ; it is part of the task which he has assigned you. Yet it is true your heart is to be free all the time; and see that you stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free.

I thought your name had been altered before now. In a new station you will have need of new watchfulness. Still redeem the time; be steadily serious; and follow your own conscience in all things.

XXXVI.—TO THE SAME.

London, August 2, 1776.

MY DEAR SISTER,—I know not that you differ from me at all. You are certainly in your place at present; and it

seems one providential reason of your ill health was, to drive you thither. Now use all the ability which God giveth, and he will give more : unto him that hath shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly ; it is the hand of the diligent that maketh rich. If you can persuade honest Alice Brammah to be cleanly as well as gentle, she will be tenfold more useful ; and so will Billy Brammah, if he will be teachable and advisable ; otherwise there is a fly in the pot of ointment. You are sent to Leeds chiefly for the sake of those that enjoy, or thirst after, perfect love. Redeem the time ! Go on in His name ! And let the world and the devil fall under your feet !

XXXVII.—TO MRS. SARAH RYAN.*

Newbury, November 8, 1757.

MY DEAR SISTER,—In the hurry of business I had not time to write down what you desired,—the rules of our family. So I snatch a few minutes to do it now ; and the more cheerfully, because I know you will observe them.

1. The family rises, part at four, part at half an hour after.

2. They breakfast at seven, dine at twelve, and sup at six.

3. They spend the hour from five to six in the evening (after a little joint prayer) in private.

4. They pray together at nine, and then retire to their chambers ; so that all are in bed before ten.

5. They observe all Fridays in the year as days of fasting, or abstinence.

You, in particular, I advise,—Suffer no impertinent visitant, no unprofitable conversation, in the house. It is a city set upon a hill ; and all that is in it should be “holiness to the Lord.”

On what a pinnacle do you stand ! You are placed in

* Mr. Wesley's housekeeper at Bristol.—Ed.

the eye of all the world, friends and enemies. You have no experience of these things ; no knowledge of the people ; no advantages of education ; not large natural abilities ; and are but a novice, as it were, in the ways of God ! It requires all the omnipotent love of God to preserve you in your present station. Stand fast in the Lord, and in the power of his might ! Show that nothing is too hard for him. Take to thee the whole armour of God ; and do and suffer all things through Christ strengthening thee. If you continue teachable and advisable, I know nothing that shall be able to hurt you.

XXXVIII.—TO THE SAME.

Norwich, November 22, 1757.

MY DEAR SISTER,—May the peace and love of God spring up in your heart, as in time past, and more abundantly ! You have refreshed my bowels in the Lord : I feel your words, and praise God on your behalf. I not only excuse but love your simplicity ; and whatever freedom you use, it will be welcome.

Surely God will never suffer me to be ashamed of my confidence in you. I have been censured for it by some of your nearest friends ; but I cannot repent of it. Will not you put forth all your strength, (which indeed is not yours ; it is the Spirit of the Father which now worketh in you,) 1. In managing all things pertaining to the house, so as to adorn the gospel of God our Saviour ? 2. In feeding the sheep he has committed to your immediate care, and carrying the weak and sickly in your bosom ? 3. In assisting, quickening, and directing the family at Kingswood, whom I trust you will always bear upon your heart ? 4. In reproving, stirring up, or confirming all whom the providence of God shall put into your hands ? And, lastly, in watching over, and helping forward in the ways of God, one who has more need of help than all the rest ; and who is always willing to receive it from you, because you always speak the truth in love ?

Do you find no interruption or abatement at any time of your joy in the Lord? Do you continually see God; and that without any cloud, or darkness, or mist between? Do you pray without ceasing, without ever being diverted from it by any thing inward or outward? Are you never hindered by any person or thing? by the power or subtlety of Satan, or by the weakness or disorders of the body, pressing down the soul? Can you be thankful for every thing without exception? And do you feel all working together for good? Do you do nothing, great or small, merely to please yourself? Do you feel no touch of any desire or affection but what springs from the pure love of God? Do you speak no words but from a principle of love, and under the guidance of his Spirit? O how I long to find you unblameable in all things, and holy as He that hath called you is holy!

XXXIX.—TO MR. JOSEPH COWNLEY.

Dublin, April 12, 1750.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I doubt you are in a great deal more danger from honour than from dishonour. So it is with me. I always find there is most hazard in sailing upon smooth water. When the winds blow, and the seas rage, even the sleepers will rise and call upon God.

From Newcastle to London, and from London to Bristol, God is everywhere reviving his work. I find it so now in Dublin, although there has been great imprudence in some, whereby grievous wolves have lately crept in among us, not sparing the flock; by whom some souls have been utterly destroyed, and others wounded who are not yet recovered. Those who ought to have stood in the gap did not; but I trust they will be wiser for the time to come. After a season I think it will be highly expedient for you to labour in Ireland again. Mr. Lunell has been on the brink of the grave by a fever. Yesterday we had hopes of his recovery. I see a danger you are in, which

perhaps you do not see yourself. Is it not most pleasing to me, as well as you, to be always preaching of the love of God? And is there not a time when we are peculiarly led thereto, and find a peculiar blessing therein? Without doubt so it is. But yet it would be utterly wrong and unscriptural to preach of nothing else. Let the law always prepare for the gospel. I scarce ever spoke more earnestly here of the love of God in Christ than last night: but it was after I had been tearing the unawakened in pieces. Go thou and do likewise. It is true, the love of God in Christ alone feeds his children; but even they are to be guided as well as fed; yea, and often physicked too: and the bulk of our hearers must be purged before they are fed; else we only feed the disease. Beware of all honey. It is the best extreme; but it is an extreme.

XL.—TO THE SAME.

London, January 10, 1756.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I have no objection to any thing but the blister. If it does good, well. But if I had been at Cork, all the physicians in Ireland should not have put it upon your head. Remember poor Bishop Pearson. An apothecary, to cure a pain in his head, covered it with a large blister. In an hour he cried out, “O my head, my head!” and was a fool ever after to the day of his death. I believe cooling things (if any thing under heaven) would remove that violent irritation of your nerves which probably occasions the pain. Moderate riding may be of use; I believe of more than the blister: only do not take more labour upon you than you can bear. Do as much as you can, and no more. Let us make use of the present time. Every day is of importance. We know not how few days of peace remain. We join in love to you and yours.

I am, dear Joseph,

Your affectionate friend and brother.

XLI.—TO MISS —.

February 21, 1759.

PROBABLY, Miss —, this may be the last trouble of the kind which you will receive from me. Therefore you may forgive me this; and the rather, when you consider my motives to it. You know I can have no temporal view; I can have none but a faint, distant hope (because with God all things are possible) of doing some service to one whom I love. And this may answer the question which you might naturally ask, "What would you have? What do you want with me?" I want you, not to be a convert to my opinions, but to be a member of Christ, a child of God, and an heir of his kingdom. Be any thing, as to outward profession, so you are lowly in heart; so you resist and conquer every motion of pride, and have that mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus. Be what you please besides; only be meek and gentle, and in patience possess your soul; so that one may truly say to you,—

"Calm thou ever art within,
All unruffled, all serene."

Hear what preacher you will; but hear the voice of God, and beware of prejudice and every unkind temper: beware of foolish and hurtful desires, or they will pierce you through with many sorrows. In one word, be any thing but a trifler, a trifler with God and your own soul. It was not for this that God gave you

"A mind superior to the vulgar herd."

No, Miss —, no! but that you might employ all your talents to the glory of him that gave them. O do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God! Is he not still striving with you? striving to make you, not almost, but altogether, a Christian? Indeed you must be all or nothing; a saint or a devil, eminent in sin or holiness! The good Lord deliver you from every snare, and guide your feet in the way of peace!

How great a pleasure would this give to all your real friends, and in particular to

Your affectionate servant for Christ's sake.

XLII.—TO THE SAME.

Colchester, March 20, 1759.

My wife, Miss —, surprised me last night by informing me you are left mistress of a large fortune. Shall I say, agreeably surprised me? I cannot tell, because I believe there is another world; and I do not know what influence this change may have on your condition. Therefore I am in fear and in hope. You may be hereby far more happy, or far more miserable, in eternity! O make a stand! Consider the situation you are in: perhaps never before were you in so great danger. You know a little of your natural tempers: now you have means of indulging, and thereby inflaming them to the uttermost. And how many will incite you so to do! How few will dare to warn you against it! Now what food will you have for pride! what infinite temptations to think more highly than you ought to think! You do so already. But O where will you stop? The good Lord arrest the storm in mid career! How impetuously now, unless God interpose, must self-will whirl you along! How deeply, unless he help, will you shortly be immersed in practical atheism! as ten thousand things will concur to drive God out of your thoughts, as much as if he were not in the world. But, above all, how will you escape from being swallowed up in idolatry? love of the world, such as you never knew before?

Hitherto you have been greatly superior to every delicacy in food: but even this may assault you now; and perhaps raise in you other desires which you are now a stranger to. At present, you are above the follies of dress? but will you be so a twelvemonth hence? May you not easily slide into the pride of life, in this as well as other

instances ? especially considering how your vanity will be gratified thereby ? For who will not admire and applaud your admirable taste ? It will only remain for you to marry some agreeable person, that has much wit and sense, with little or no religion ; then it is finished ! Either you will be thoroughly miserable in this world, or miserable to eternity.

“ But what business is this of yours ? Cannot you let me alone ? What have I to do with you ? ” Believe me, I could very easily let you alone, if I had not a real and tender good-will toward you ; and if I did not know (what perhaps you do not) that you have need even of me. You want friends who understand you well, and who dare tell you the whole, plain truth ; and yet not in a surly, imperious manner ; for then you could not receive it. I have endeavoured to do this once more. Will not you forgive me ? I cannot but think, if you do not thank, you will at least excuse,

Your affectionate servant.

XLIII.—TO MISS H——.

Dublin, April 5, 1758.

IT is with great reluctance that I at length begin to write : first, because I abhor disputing, and never enter upon it but when I am, as it were, dragged into it by the hair of the head ; and, next, because I have so little hope that any good will arise from the present dispute. I fear your passions are too deeply interested in the question to admit the force of the strongest reason. So that, were it not for the tender regard I have for you, which makes your desire a motive I cannot resist, I should not spend half an hour in so thankless a labour, and one wherein I have so little prospect of success.

“ The doctrine of perfection,” you say, “ has perplexed you much, since some of our preachers have placed it in so dreadful a light ; one of them affirming, ‘ A believer, till

perfect, is under the curse of God, and in a state of damnation :’ another, ‘ If you die before you have attained it, you will surely perish.’ ”

By *perfection*, I mean, *perfect love*, or the loving God with all our heart, so as to rejoice evermore, to pray without ceasing, and in every thing to give thanks. I am convinced every believer may attain this ; yet I do not say, he is in a state of damnation, or under the curse of God, till he does attain. No, he is in a state of grace, and in favour with God, as long as he believes. Neither would I say, “ If you die without it, you will perish ; ” but rather, Till you are saved from unholy tempers you are not ripe for glory. There will therefore more promises be fulfilled in your soul, before God takes you to himself.

“ But none can attain perfection, unless they first believe it attainable.” Neither do I affirm this. I know a Calvinist in London, who never believed it attainable till the moment she did attain it ; and then lay declaring it aloud for many days, till her spirit returned to God.

“ But you yourself believed, twenty years ago, that we should not put off the infection of nature, but with our bodies.” I did so. But I believe otherwise now, for many reasons, some of which you afterward mention. How far Mr. Roquet or Mr. Walsh may have mistaken these, I know not : I can only answer for myself.

“ The nature and fitness of things ” is so ambiguous an expression, that I never make use of it. Yet if you ask me, “ Is it fit or necessary, in the nature of things, that a soul should be saved from all sin before it enters into glory ? ” I answer, It is. And so it is written, “ No unclean thing shall enter into it.” Therefore, whatever degrees of holiness they did, or did not, attain, in the preceding parts of life, neither Jews nor heathens, any more than Christians, ever did, or ever will, enter into the New Jerusalem, unless they are cleansed from all sin before they enter into eternity.

I do by no means exclude the Old Testament from bearing witness to any truths of God. Nothing less ; but I say,

the experience of the Jews is not the standard of Christian experience ; and that therefore, were it true, the Jews did not love God with all their heart and soul, it would not follow, therefore, no Christian can ; because we may attain what they did not.

“ But,” you say, “ either their words do not contain a promise of such perfection, or God did not fulfil this promise to them to whom he made it.” I answer, He surely will fulfil it to them to whom he made it ; namely, to the Jews, after their dispersion into all lands : and to these is the promise made ; as will be clear to any who impartially considers the thirtieth chapter of Deuteronomy, wherein it stands.

I doubt whether this perfection can be proved by Luke vi, 40. From 1 John iii, 9, (which belongs to all the children of God,) I never attempted to prove it ; but I still think it is clearly described in those words, “ As he is, so are we in this world.” And yet it doth not now appear “ what we shall be,” when this vile body is “ fashioned like unto his glorious body ;” when we shall see him, not in a glass, but face to face, and be transformed into his likeness.

Those expressions, John xiii, 10, “ Ye are clean, clean every whit,” are allowed to refer to justification only. But that expression, “ If we walk in the light as he is in the light,” cannot refer to justification only. It does not relate to justification at all, whatever the other clause may do. Therefore, those texts are by no means parallel, neither can the latter be limited by the former ; although it is sure, the privileges described in both belong to every adult believer.

But not only abundance of particular texts, but the whole tenor of Scripture declares, Christ came to “ destroy the works of the devil, to save us from our sins ;” all the works of the devil, all our sins, without any exception or limitation. Indeed should we say, we have no sin to be saved or cleansed from, we should make Him come in vain. But it is at least as much for his glory to cleanse us from them all before our death as after it.

"But St. James says, 'In many things we offend all; and whatever *we* might mean, if alone, the expression, *we all*, was never before understood to exclude the person speaking.' Indeed it was. It is unquestionably to be understood so as to exclude Isaiah, the person speaking, 'We are all as an unclean thing; we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away,' lxiiv, 6. For this was not the case with Isaiah himself. Of himself he says, 'My soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness,' lxi, 10. Here the prophet, like the apostle, uses the word *we* instead of *you*, to soften the harshness of an unpleasing truth.

In this chapter the apostle is not cautioning them against censuring others, but entering upon a new argument; wherein the second verse has an immediate reference to the first, but none at all to the thirteenth of the preceding chapter.

I added, "'We offend all,' cannot be spoken of all Christians; for immediately there follows the mention of one who offends not, as the *we* before mentioned did." You answer, "His not offending in word will not prove that he does not offend 'in many things.'" I think St. James himself proves it in saying, "He is able to bridle also the whole body;" to direct all his actions as well as words, according to the holy, perfect will of God; which those, and those only, are able to do who love God with all their hearts. And yet these very persons can sincerely say, "Forgive us our trespasses." For as long as they are in the body they are liable to mistake, and to speak or act according to that mistaken judgment. Therefore they cannot abide the rigour of justice, but still need mercy and forgiveness.

Were you to ask, "What if I should die this moment?" I should answer, I believe you would be saved, because I am persuaded none that has faith can die before he is made ripe for glory. This is the doctrine which I con-

tinually teach, which has nothing to do with justification by works. Nor can it discourage any who have faith, neither weaken their peace, nor damp their joy in the Lord. True believers are not distressed hereby, either in life or in death; unless in some rare instance, wherein the temptation of the devil is joined with a melancholy temper.

Upon the whole, I observe your great argument turns all along on a mistake of the doctrine. Whatever warm expressions may drop from young men, we do not teach that any believer is under condemnation. So that all the inferences drawn from this supposition fall to the ground at once.

Your other letter I hope to consider hereafter, though I have great reason to apprehend your prejudice will still be too strong for my arguments. However, whether you expect it or not, I must wish for your perfection. You of all people have most need of perfect love, because this alone casts out fear.

I am, with great sincerity,

Your affectionate brother and servant.

XLIV.—TO —.

July 1, 1759.

DEAR SIR,—Considering the variety of business which must lie upon you, I am not willing to trouble you too often; yet cannot any longer delay to return thanks for your favour of May 21. How happy is it that there is a higher wisdom than our own to guide us through the mazes of life! that we have an unction from the Holy One to teach us of all things where human teaching fails! And it certainly must fail in a thousand instances. General rules cannot reach all particular cases; in some of which there is such a complication of circumstances, that God alone can show what steps we should take. There is one circumstance in your case which claims your peculiar attention, and makes it necessary often to check that bold-

ness and simplicity which otherwise would be both your duty and pleasure. But O how easily may you comply too far, and hurt yourself in hopes of gaining another! nay, perhaps hurt the other too by that very compliance which was designed to help! And who is able to lay the line? to determine how far you should comply, and where fix your foot? May the God of wisdom direct you in all your steps! And I conceive he will rather do this by giving you light directly from himself, in meditation and private prayer, than by the advice of others, who can hardly be impartial in so tender a point. Is it not then advisable that you should much commune with God and your own heart? You may then lay aside all the trappings that naturally tend to hide you from yourself, and appear naked, as a poor sinful worm, before the great God, the Creator of heaven and of earth! the great God, who is your Father and your Friend! who hath prepared for you a kingdom! who calls you to forget the little things of earth, and to sit down with him on his throne! O may you dwell on these things till they possess your whole soul, and cause you to love the honour which cometh of God only!

XLV.—TO —.

May 16, 1759.

DEAR SIR,—Since I received your favour I have had many thoughts on worldly and Christian prudence. What is the nature of each? How do they differ? How may we distinguish one from the other?

It seems worldly prudence either pursues worldly ends—riches, honour, ease, or pleasure; or pursues Christian ends on worldly maxims, or by worldly means. The grand maxims which obtain in the world are, the more power, the more money, the more learning, and the more reputation a man has, the more good he will do. And whenever a Christian, pursuing the noblest ends, forms his behaviour by these maxims, he will infallibly (though perhaps by insensible

degrees) decline into worldly prudence. He will use more or less of conformity to the world, if not in sin, yet in doing some things that are good in themselves, yet (all things considered) are not good to him; and perhaps at length using guile or disguise, simulation or dissimulation; either seeming to be what he is not, or not seeming to be what he is. By any of these marks may worldly prudence be discerned from the wisdom which is from above.

This Christian prudence pursues Christian maxims, and by Christian means. The ends it pursues are holiness in every kind, and in the highest degree; and usefulness in every kind and degree. And herein it proceeds on the following maxims:—The help that is done upon earth, God doeth it himself; it is he that worketh all in all; and that, not by human power; generally he uses weak things to confound the strong;—not by men of wealth; most of his choicest instruments may say, “Silver and gold have I none;”—not by learned or wise men after the flesh; no, the foolish things hath God chosen;—not by men of reputation, but by the men that were as the filth and offscouring of the world; all which is for this plain reason,—“that no flesh may glory in his sight.”

Christian prudence pursues these ends upon these principles, by only Christian means. A truly prudent Christian, while, in things purely indifferent, he becomes all things to all men, yet wherever duty is concerned, matters the example of all mankind no more than a grain of sand. His word is then,—

“Non me, qui cætera, vincit
Impetus, et rapido contrarius evehor orbi.”*

He will not, to gain the favour or shun the hate of all, omit the least point of duty. He cannot prevail upon himself on any account or pretence to use either simulation or

* This quotation from Ovid is thus translated by Addison:—

“I steer against their notions; nor am I
Borne back by all the current of the sky.”—ED.

dissimulation. There is no guile in his mouth; no evasion or ambiguity. Having one desire, one design, to glorify God with his body and with his spirit; having only one fear,—

“Lest a motion, or a word,
Or thought arise, to grieve his Lord;”

having one rule, the word of God; one guide, even his Spirit; he goes on in childlike simplicity. Continually seeing Him that is invisible, he walks in open day. Looking unto Jesus, and deriving strength from him, he goes on in his steps in the work of faith, the labour of love, the patience of hope, till he is called up to be ever with the Lord.

O that this were in all points your own character? Surely you desire it above all things. But how shall you attain? Difficulties and hinderances surround you on every side! Can you bear with my plainness? I believe you can. Therefore I will speak without any reserve. I fear you have scarce one friend who has not more or less of the prudence which is not from above. And I doubt you have (in or near your own rank) hardly one example of true Christian prudence! Yet I am persuaded your own heart advises you right, or rather God in your heart. O that you may hearken to his voice alone, and let all creatures keep silence before him! Why should they encumber you with Saul's armour? If you essay to go forth thus, it will be in vain. You have no need of this, neither of his sword or spear; for you trust in the Lord of hosts. O go forth in his strength! and with the stones of the brook you shall overthrow all your enemies.

XLVI.—TO SIR —.

October 28, 1754.

SIR,—Whether I see you any more in this life or no, I rejoice that I have seen you this once, and that God

enabled you to bear with patience what I spoke in the simplicity of my heart.

The substance of what I took the liberty to mention to you this morning was:—You are on the borders of the grave, as well as I: shortly we must both appear before God. When it seemed to me, some months since, that my life was near an end, I was troubled that I had not dealt plainly with you. This you will permit me to do now, without any reserve, in the fear and in the presence of God.

I reverence you for your office as a magistrate: I believe you to be an honest, upright man: I love you for having protected an innocent people from their cruel and lawless oppressors. But so much the more am I obliged to say, (though I judge not; God is the judge,) I fear you are covetous; that you love the world. And if you do, as sure as the word of God is true, you are not in a state of salvation.

The substance of your answer was, that many people exhort others to charity from self-interest; that men of fortune must mind their fortune; that you cannot go about to look for poor people; that when you have seen them yourself, and relieved them, they were scarce ever satisfied; that many make an ill use of what you give them; that you cannot trust the account people give of themselves by letters; that nevertheless you do give to private persons by the hands of Colonel Hudson and others; that you have also given to several hospitals a hundred pounds at a time; but that you must support your family; that the Lowther family has continued above four hundred years; that you are for great things, for public charities, and for saving the nation from ruin; and that others may think as they please, but this is your way of thinking, and has been for many years.

To this I replied,—1. Sir, I have no self-interest in this matter: I consult your interest, not my own: I want **nothing** from you; I desire **nothing** from you; I expect

nothing from you. But I am concerned for your immortal spirit, which must so soon launch into eternity. 2. It is true, men of fortune must mind their fortune ; but they must not love the world. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." It is true, likewise, you cannot go about to look for poor people ; but you may be sufficiently informed of them by those that can. 4. And if some of these are never satisfied, this is no reason for not relieving others. 5. Suppose, too, that some make an ill use of what you give, the loss falls on their own head. You will not lose your reward for their fault. What you laid out, God will pay you again. 6. Yet certainly you do well to have all the assurance you can, that those to whom you give are likely to make a good use of it ; and therefore to expect a stronger recommendation of them than their own, whether by letter or otherwise. 7. I rejoice that you have given to many by so worthy a man as Colonel Hudson, whose word is certainly a sufficient recommendation. 8. I rejoice, likewise, that you have given some hundreds of pounds to the hospitals, and wish it had been ten thousand. 9. 'To the support of the family I did not object ; but begged leave to ask whether this could not be done without giving ten thousand a year to one who had as much already ? and whether you could answer this to God, in the day wherein he shall judge the world ? 10. I likewise granted that the family had continued above four hundred years ; but observed, meantime, that God regarded it not one jot the more for this, and that four hundred or one thousand years are but a moment compared to eternity. 11. I observed, likewise, that great things may be done, and little things not left undone. 12. And that if this or any other way of thinking be according to Scripture, then it is sound and good ; whereas, if it be contrary to Scripture, it is not good, and the longer we are in it, so much the worse.

Upon the whole, I must once more earnestly entreat you to consider yourself, and God, and eternity. As to yourself,

you are not the proprietor of any thing ; no, not of one shilling in the world. You are only a steward of what another intrusts you with, to be laid out, not according to your will, but his. And what would you think of your steward, if he laid out what is called your money, according to his own will and pleasure ? 2. Is not God the sole proprietor of all things ? And are you not to give an account to him for every part of his goods ? And O how dreadful an account, if you have expended any part of them not according to his will, but your own ! 3. Is not death at hand ? And are not you and I just stepping into eternity ? And are we not just going to appear in the presence of God ; and that naked of all worldly goods ? Will you then rejoice in your money you have left behind you ? or in that you have given to support a family, as it is called ; that is, in truth, to support the pride, and vanity, and luxury, which you have yourself despised all your life long ? O sir, I beseech you, for the sake of God, for the sake of your own immortal soul, examine yourself, whether you do not love money. If so, you cannot love God. And if we die without the fear of God, what remains ? Only to be banished from him for ever and ever !

XLVII.—TO MISS ELIZABETH HARDY.

December 26, 1761.

DEAR SISTER,—The path of controversy is a rough path. But it seems smoother while I am walking with you : so that I could follow you through all its windings ; only my time will not permit.

The plain fact is this : I know many who love God with all their heart, mind, soul, and strength. He is their one desire, their one delight, and they are continually happy in him. They love their neighbour as themselves. They feel as sincere, fervent, constant a desire for the happiness of every man, good or bad, friend or enemy, as for their own. They “rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in

every thing give thanks." Their souls are continually streaming up to God in holy joy, prayer, and praise. This is plain, sound, Scriptural experience: and of this we have more and more living witnesses.

But these souls dwell in a shattered, corruptible body, and are so pressed down thereby that they cannot exert their love as they would, by always thinking, speaking, and acting precisely right. For want of better bodily organs, they sometimes inevitably think, speak, or act wrong. Yet I think they need the advocacy of Christ, even for these involuntary defects; although they do not imply a defect of love, but of understanding. However that be, I cannot doubt the fact. They are all love; yet they cannot walk as they desire. "But are they all love while they grieve the Holy Spirit?" No, surely; they are then fallen from their steadfastness; and this they may do even after they are sealed. So that, even to such, strong cautions are needful. After the heart is cleansed from pride, anger, and desire, it may suffer them to re-enter: therefore, I have long thought some expressions in the hymns are abundantly too strong; as I cannot perceive any state mentioned in Scripture from which we may not (in a measure, at least) fall.

Persons who talked of being emptied before they were filled, were, for some time, a great stumbling-block to me too; but I have since considered it thus: the great point in question is, Can we be saved from all sin, or not? Now it may please God to act in that uncommon manner purposely to clear this point; to satisfy those persons that they are saved from all sin, before he goes on in his work.

Forgive me, dear Miss Hardy, that I do but just touch upon the heads of your letter. Indeed, this defect does not spring from the want of love, but only from want of time. I should not wonder if your soul was one of the next that was filled with pure love. Receive it freely, thou poor bruised reed! It is able to make thee stand.

XLVIII.—TO LADY —.

March 18, 1760.

MY LADY,—It was impossible to see the distress into which your ladyship was thrown by the late unhappy affair, without bearing a part of it, without sympathizing with you. But may we not see God therein? May we not both hear and understand his voice? We must allow, it is generally “small and still;” yet he speaks sometimes in the whirlwind. Permit me to speak to your ladyship with all freedom; not as to a person of quality, but as to a creature whom the Almighty made for himself, and one that is in a few days to appear before him.

You were not only a nominal, but a real Christian. You tasted of the powers of the world to come. You knew God the Father had accepted you, through his eternal Son; and God the Spirit bore witness with your spirit, that you were a child of God.

But you fell among thieves, and such as were peculiarly qualified to rob you of your God. Two of these in particular were sensible, learned, well-bred, well-natured, moral men. These did not assault you in a rough, abrupt, offensive manner. No; you would then have armed yourself against them, and have repelled all their attacks. But by soft, delicate, unobserved touches, by pleasing strokes of raillery, by insinuations, rather than surly arguments, they, by little and little, sapped the foundation of your faith: perhaps not only of your living faith, your “evidence of things not seen;” but even of your notional. It is well if they left you so much as an assent to the Bible, or a belief that Christ is God over all! And what was the consequence of this? Did not your love of God grow cold? Did not you

“Measure back your steps to earth again?”

Did not your love of the world revive? even of those poor low trifles which, in your very childhood, you utterly despised?

Where are you now? full of faith? looking into the holiest, and seeing Him that is invisible? Does your heart now glow with love to Him who is daily pouring his benefits upon you? Do you now even desire it? Do you now say, (as you did almost twenty years ago,)—

“Keep me dead to all below,
Only Christ resolved to know;
Firm, and disengaged, and free,
Seeking all my bliss in thee!”

Is your taste now for heavenly things? Are not you a lover of pleasure more than a lover of God? And O what pleasure! What is the pleasure of visiting? of modern conversation? Is there any more reason than religion in it? I wonder what rational appetite does it gratify? Setting religion quite out of the question, I cannot conceive how a woman of sense can—relish, should I say? no, but—suffer so insipid an entertainment.

O that the time past may suffice! Is it not now high time that you should awake out of sleep? Now God calls aloud! My dear lady, now hear the voice of the Son of God, and live! The trouble in which your tender parent is now involved may restore all that reverence for her which could not but be a little impaired while you supposed she was “righteous overmuch.” O how admirably does God lay hold of and “strengthen the things that remain” in you! your gratitude, your humane temper, your generosity, your filial tenderness! And why is this, but to improve every right temper; to free you from all that is irrational or unholy; to make you all that you were, yea, all that you should be; to restore you to the whole image of God?

XLIX.—TO MR. ALEXANDER COATES.

Osley, July 7, 1761.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—The perfection I teach is perfect love; loving God with all the heart; receiving Christ as

prophet, priest, and king to reign alone over all our thoughts, words, and actions. The Papists neither teach nor believe this: give even the devil his due. They teach there is no perfection here which is not consistent with venial sins; and among venial sins they commonly reckon simple fornication. Now I think this is so far from the perfection I teach, that it does not come up to any but Mr. Relly's perfection. To say Christ will not reign alone in our hearts in this life; will not enable us to give him all our hearts; this, in my judgment, is making him a half-Saviour: he can be no more, if he does not quite save us from our sins. I pray, then, be not quite so peremptory. Who exalts Christ most? those who call on him to be the sole Monarch of the heart; or those who allow him only to share the power, and to govern most of the thoughts and tempers? Who honour him most? those who believe he heals all our sickness, takes away all our ungodliness; or those who say, He heals only the greater part of it, till death does what he cannot do? I know no creature (of us) who says, "Part of our salvation belongs to Christ, and part to us." No; we all say, Christ alone saves us from all sin; and your question is not about the author, but the measure of salvation. Both agree it is all Christ; but is it all salvation, or only half salvation, he will give? Who was Pelagius? By all I can pick up from ancient authors, I guess he was both a wise and a holy man. But we know nothing but his name; for his writings are all destroyed; not one line of them left. But, brother Coates, this way of talking is highly offensive. I advise you, 1. If you are willing to labour with us, preach no doctrine contrary to ours. I have preached twenty years in some of Mr. Whitefield's societies, yet to this day I never contradicted him among his own people. I did not think it honest, neither necessary at all. I could preach salvation by faith, and leave all controversy untouched. I advise you, 2. Avoid all those strong, rhetorical exclamations, "O horrid! O dreadful!" and the like, unless when you are strongly

exhorting sinners to renounce the devil and all his works. 3. Acquaint yourself better with the doctrine we preach; and you will find it not dreadful, but altogether lovely. 4. Observe that if forty persons think and speak wrong, either about justification or sanctification, (and perhaps fancy they have attained both,) this is no objection to the doctrines themselves. They must bear their own burden. But this does not at all affect the point in question. 5. Remember, as sure as you are that "believers cannot fall from grace," others (wise and holy men too) are equally sure they can; and you are as much obliged to bear with them as they are to bear with you. 6. Abstain from all controversy in public. Indeed, you have not a talent for it. You have an honest heart, but not a clear head. Practical religion is your point; therefore, 7. Keep to this: repentance toward God, faith in Christ, holiness of heart and life, a growing in grace and in the knowledge of Christ, the continual need of his atoning blood, a constant confidence in him, and all these every moment to our life's end. In none of these will any of our preachers contradict you, or you them.

When you leave this plain path, and get into controversy, then they think you "invade the glories of our adorable King, and the unspeakable rights, and privileges, and comforts of his children;" and can they then "tamely hold their peace?"

O Sander, know the value of peace and love!

I am your affectionate brother.

L.—TO MR. S. F.

Bristol, October 13, 1762.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—In general, when I apprehend, "Certainly this is a contradiction," if I find other persons of equal sagacity with myself, of equal natural and acquired abilities, apprehend it is not, I immediately suspect my own judgment; and the more so, because I remember I have

been many times full as sure as I am now, and yet afterward I found myself mistaken.

As to this particular question, I believe I am able to answer every objection which can be made. But I am not able to do it without expending much time which may be better employed. For this reason I am persuaded it is so far from being my duty to enter into a formal controversy about it that it would be a wilful sin; it would be employing my short residue of life in a less profitable way than it may be employed.

The proposition which I will hold is this: "A person may be cleansed from all sinful tempers, and yet need the atoning blood." For what? For "negligences and ignorances;" for both words and actions (as well as omissions) which are, in a sense, transgressions of the perfect law. And I believe no one is clear of these till he lays down this corruptible body.

Now, Sammy, dropping the point of contradiction, tell me simply what you would have more. Do you believe evil tempers remain till death? all or some? if some only; which?

I love truth wherever I find it; so, if you can help me to a little more of it, you will oblige,

Dear Sammy,

Yours, &c.

LI.—TO THE REV. DR. JOHN TAYLOR.

Hartlepool, July 3, 1759.

REV. SIR,—I esteem you as a person of uncommon sense and learning; but your doctrine I cannot esteem, and some time since I believed it my duty to speak my sentiments at large concerning your doctrine of original sin. When Mr. Newton of Liverpool mentioned this, and asked whether you designed to answer, you said you thought not; "for it would only be a personal controversy between John Wesley and John Taylor." How gladly, if I durst,

would I accept of this discharge from so unequal a contest? For I am thoroughly sensible, humanly speaking, it is *formica contra leonem*.^{*} How gladly, were it indeed no other than a personal controversy! But certainly it is not; it is a controversy *de re*, if ever there was one in this world. Indeed, concerning a thing of the highest importance; nay, all the things that concern our eternal peace. It is Christianity or heathenism! for, take away the Scriptural doctrine of redemption or justification, and that of the new birth, the beginning of sanctification, or, which amounts to the same, explain them as you do, suitably to your doctrine of original sin, and what is Christianity better than heathenism? Wherein, save in rectifying some of our notions, has the religion of St. Paul any pre-eminence over that of Socrates or Epictetus?

This is, therefore, to my apprehension, the least a personal controversy of any in the world. Your person and mine are out of the question. The point is, Are those things that have been believed for many ages throughout the Christian world, real, solid truths, or monkish dreams and vain imaginations?

But farther: it is certain between you and me there need be no personal controversy at all; for we may agree to leave each other's person and character absolutely untouched, while we sum up and answer the several arguments advanced as plainly and closely as we can.

Either I or you mistake the whole of Christianity from the beginning to the end! Either my scheme or yours is as contrary to the Scriptural as the Koran is. Is it mine, or yours? Yours has gone through all England, and made numerous converts. I attack it from end to end. Let all Eng^land judge whether it can be defended or not!

Earnestly praying that God may give you and me a right understanding in all things,

I am, Rev. Sir,

Your servant for Christ's sake.

^{*} An ant against a lion.—ED.

LII.—TO LORD —.

July 26, 1764.

MY LORD,—Upon an attentive consideration, it will appear to every impartial person that the uniting of the serious clergy in the manner I proposed in a former letter is not a matter of indifferency; but what none can reject, unless at the peril of his own soul. For every article therein mentioned is undeniably contained in the royal law, the law of love; and, consequently, the observance thereof is bound upon every man, as indispensably necessary to salvation. It will appear, farther, that every single person may observe it, whether the other will or no. For many years, I, for instance, have observed this rule in every article. I labour to do so now; and will, by God's help, whatever others do, observe it to the end.

I rejoice that your lordship so heartily concurs in doing what is in your power to promote a general observance of it. Certainly this is not possible to be effected by merely human means; but, it seems, your lordship has taken one good step toward it by communicating it to several. I am persuaded, at the same time, your lordship's wish is, that it might take place everywhere. The same step I purpose to take by sending to each of those gentlemen the substance of what I wrote to your lordship, and desiring them to tell me freely whatever objections they have against such a union. As many of those as are grounded on reason, I doubt not, will be easily answered. Those only which spring from some wrong temper must remain till that temper is subdued. For instance: first, "We cannot unite," says one, "because we cannot trust one another." I answer to your reason or understanding, No matter whether we can or no. Thus far we must unite, trust or not; otherwise we sin against God. Secondly, I can trust you; why cannot you trust me? I can have no private end herein. I have neither personal hopes nor fears from you. I want nothing which you can give me; and I am not afraid of

your doing me any hurt, though you may hurt yourself and the cause of God. But I cannot answer your envy, jealousy, pride, or credulity. As long as those remain, objections, however cut off, will spring up again like hydra's heads.

If your lordship has heard any objections, I should be glad to know them. May I be permitted to ask, Have not the objections you have heard made some impression upon your lordship? Have they not occasioned (if I may speak freely) your lordship's standing aloof from me? Have they not set your lordship farther and farther off, ever since I waited upon you at —? Why do I ask? Indeed, not upon my own account. *Quid mea? Ego in portu navigo.** I can truly say I neither fear nor desire any thing from your lordship: to speak a rough truth, I do not desire any intercourse with any persons of quality in England. I mean, for my own sake. They do me no good, and I fear I can do none to them. If it be desired, I will readily leave all those to the care of my fellow-labourers. I will article with them so to do, rather than this shall be any bone of contention.

Were I not afraid of giving your lordship pain, I would speak yet still farther. Methinks you desire I should; that is, to tell you, once for all, every thought that rises in my heart. I will then: at present I do not want you; but I really think you want me. For have you a person in all England who speaks to your lordship so plain and downright as I do? who considers not the peer, but the man? not the earl, but the immortal spirit? who rarely commends, but often blames, and perhaps would do it oftener if you desired it? who is jealous over you with a godly jealousy, lest you should be less a Christian by being a nobleman? lest, after having made a fair advance toward heaven, you should

“Measure back your steps to earth again!”

* This quotation from Terence is thus rendered by Dr. Samuel Patrick: “But now all is at your peril. I ride safe in the harbour.”—Ed.

O my lord, is not such a person as this needful for you in the highest degree? If you have any such, I have no more to say, but that I pray God to bless him to your soul. If you have not, despise not even the assistance which it may please God to give you by,

My lord,

Your lordship's ready servant.

LIII.—TO THE REV. MR. HARTLEY.

March 27, 1764.

DEAR SIR,—Your book on the millennium and the mystic writers was lately put into my hands. I cannot but thank you for your strong and seasonable confirmation of that comfortable doctrine; of which I cannot entertain the least doubt as long as I believe the Bible. I thank you, likewise, for your remarks on that bad performance of the bishop of G——, which undoubtedly tears up by the roots all real, internal religion. Yet, at the same time, I cannot but bewail your vehement attachment to the mystic writers; with whom I conversed much for several years, and whom I then admired, perhaps more than you do now. But I found, at length, an absolute necessity of giving up either them or the Bible. So, after some time, I fixed my choice, to which I hope to adhere to my life's end. It is only the extreme attachment to these which can account for the following words:—"Mr. W. docs, in several parts of his Journals, lay down some marks of the new birth, not only doubtful, but exceptionable; as, particularly, where persons appeared agitated or convulsed under the ministry; which might be owing to other causes, rather than any regenerating work of God's Spirit." (Page 385.)

Is this true? In what one part of my Journals do I lay down any doubtful, much less exceptionable, marks of the new birth? In no part do I lay down those agitations or convulsions as any marks of it at all. Nay, I expressly declare the contrary in those very words which the bishop.

himself cites from my Journal. I declare, "These are of a disputable nature: they may be from God; they may be from nature; they may be from the devil." How is it, then, that you tell all the world Mr. W. lays them down in his Journals as marks of the new birth?

Is it kind? Would it not have been far more kind, suppose I had spoken wrong, to tell me of it in a private manner? How much more unkind was it to accuse me to all the world of a fault which I never committed!

Is it wise thus to put a sword into the hands of our common enemy? Are we not both fighting the battle of our Lord, against the world, as well as the flesh and the devil? And shall I furnish them with weapons against you, or you against me? Fine diversion for the children of the devil! And how much more would they be diverted, if I would furnish my quota of the entertainment, by falling upon you in return! But I bemoan the change in your spirit: you have not gained more lowliness or meekness since I knew you. O beware! You did not use to despise any one. This you have gained from the authors you admire. They do not express anger toward their opponents, but contempt in the highest degree. And this, I am afraid, is far more antichristian, more diabolical, than the other. The God of love deliver you and me from this spirit, and fill us with the mind that was in Christ.

LIV.—TO THE REV. MR. PLENDERLIETH.

May 23, 1768.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,—Some years ago, it was reported that I recommended the use of a crucifix to a man under sentence of death. I traced this up to its author, Dr. Stennett, an Anabaptist teacher. He was charged with it. He answered, "Why, I saw a crucifix in his cell;" (a picture of Christ on the cross;) "and I knew Mr. Wesley used to visit him; so I supposed he had brought it." This is the whole of the matter. Dr. Stennett himself I never

yet saw; nor did I ever see such a picture in the cell: and I believe the whole tale is pure invention.

I had for some time given up the thought of an interview with Mr. Erskine, when I fell into the company of Dr. Oswald. He said, "Sir, you do not know Mr. Erskine. I know him perfectly well. Send and desire an hour's conversation with him, and I am sure he will understand you better." I am glad I did send. I have done my part, and am now entirely satisfied.

I am likewise glad that Mr. E. has spoke his mind. I will answer with all simplicity, in full confidence of satisfying you, and all impartial men.

He objects, first, that I attack predestination, as subversive of all religion, and yet suffer my followers in Scotland to remain in that opinion. Much of this is true. I did attack predestination eight-and-twenty years ago; and I do not believe now any predestination which implies irrespective reprobation. But I do not believe it is necessarily subversive of all religion. I think hot disputes are much more so; therefore, I never willingly dispute with any one about it. And I advise all my friends, not in Scotland only, but all over England and Ireland, to avoid all contention on the head, and let every man remain in his own opinion. Can any man of candour blame me for this? Is there any thing unfair or disingenuous in it?

He objects, secondly, that I "assert the attainment of sinless perfection by all born of God." I am sorry Mr. E. should affirm this again. I need give no other answer than I gave before, in the seventh page of the little tract I sent him two years ago.

I do not maintain this. I do not believe it. I believe Christian perfection is not attained by any of the children of God till they are what the Apostle John terms "fathers." And this I expressly declare in that sermon which Mr. E. so largely quotes.

He objects, thirdly, that I "deny the imputation of Christ's active obedience." Since I believe justification by faith,

which I have done upward of thirty years, I have constantly maintained that we are pardoned and accepted wholly and solely for the sake of what Christ hath both done and suffered for us.

Two or three years ago, Mr. Madan's sister showed him what she had wrote down of a sermon which I had preached on this subject. He entreated me to write down the whole, and print it; saying, it would satisfy all my opponents. I was not so sanguine as to expect this: I understood mankind too well. However, I complied with his request: a few were satisfied; the rest continued just as they were before.

As long as Mr. E. continues of the mind expressed in his "Theological Essays," there is no danger that he and I should agree, any more than light and darkness. I love and reverence him, but not his doctrine. I dread every approach to Antinomianism. I have seen the fruit of it over the three kingdoms. I never said that Mr. E. and I were agreed. I will make our disagreement as public as ever he pleases; only I must, withal, specify the particulars. If he will fight with me, it must be on this ground; and then let him do what he will, and what he can.

Retaining a due sense of your friendly offices, and praying for a blessing on all your labours,

I remain, reverend and dear sir,

Your affectionate brother and servant.

LV.—TO MR. S., AT ARMAGH.

April 24, 1769.

DEAR BROTHER,—I shall now tell you the things which have been more or less upon my mind ever since I have been in the north of Ireland. If you forget them, you will be a sufferer, and so will the people; if you observe them, it will be good for both.

1. To begin with little things. If you regard your

health, touch no supper, but a little milk, or water gruel. This will entirely, by the blessing of God, secure you from nervous disorders; especially if you rise early every morning, whether you preach or no.

2. Be steadily serious. There is no country upon earth where this is more necessary than Ireland; as you are generally encompassed with those who, with a little encouragement, would laugh or trifle from morning to night.

3. In every town visit all you can from house to house. I say, *all you can*; for there will be some whom you cannot visit; and if you examine, instruct, reprove, exhort, as need requires, you will have no time hanging on your hands. It is by this means that the societies are increased wherever T. R. goes: he is preaching from morning to night; warning every one, that he may present every one perfect in Christ Jesus.

4. But on this and every other occasion, avoid all familiarity with women. This is deadly poison both to them and you. You cannot be too wary in this respect; therefore begin from this hour.

5. The chief matter of your conversation, as well as your preaching, should doubtless be the weightier matters of the law. Yet there are several (comparatively) little things which you should earnestly inculcate from time to time; for "he that despiseth small things shall fall by little and little." Such are,—

(1.) Be active, be diligent; avoid all laziness, sloth, indolence. Fly from every degree, every appearance of it; else you will never be more than half a Christian.

(2.) Be cleanly. In this let the Methodists take pattern by the Quakers. Avoid all nastiness, dirt, slovenliness, both in your person, clothes, house, and all about you. Do not stink above ground. This is a bad fruit of laziness: use all diligence to be clean; as one says,—

"Let thy mind's sweetness have its operation
Upon thy person, clothes, and habitation."

(3.) Whatever clothes you have, let them be whole ; no rents, no tatters, no rags. These are a scandal to either man or woman, being another fruit of vile laziness. Mend your clothes, or I shall never expect you to mend your lives. Let none ever see a ragged Methodist.

(4.) Use no tobacco, unless prescribed by a physician. It is an uncleanly and unwholesome self-indulgence ; and the more customary it is, the more resolutely should you break off from every degree of that evil custom.

(5.) Use no snuff, unless prescribed by a physician. I suppose no other nation in Europe is in such vile bondage to this silly, nasty, dirty custom as the Irish are. But let Christians be in this bondage no longer. Assert your liberty, and that all at once : nothing will be done by degrees. But just now you may break loose, through Christ strengthening you.

(6.) Touch no dram. It is liquid fire. It is a sure, though slow, poison. It saps the very springs of life. In Ireland, above all countries in the world, I would sacredly abstain from this, because the evil is so general ; and to this, and snuff, and smoky cabins, I impute the blindness which is so exceeding common throughout the nation.

I might have inserted, under the second article, what I particularly desire wherever you have preaching, viz., that there may be a little house. Let this be got without delay. Wherever it is not, let none expect to see me.

LVI.—TO —.

—, 1770.

DEAR SIR,—I bless God that you are not disgusted at the great plainness with which I wrote. Indeed, I know not but it might be termed roughness, which was owing partly to the pressure of mind I then felt, and partly to my being straitened for time ; otherwise I might have found softer expressions. I am thankful, likewise, for your

openness, which obliges me to be open and unreserved, and to say all I mean, and that in the most simple manner, on each of the articles that lie before us.

I must do this, even with regard to my fellow-labourers, lest I should seem to mean more than I do. But I am sensible this is a tender point, and one so extremely difficult to treat upon that I should not venture to say one word, did I not know to whom I speak. What I mean is this : from many little circumstances which have occurred, I have been afraid (just so far it went) that those clergymen with whom you are most acquainted were jealous of your being acquainted with me. I was the more afraid when I heard the sudden exclamation of one whom you well know : "Good God! Mr. Wesley is always speaking well of these gentlemen, and they can never speak well of him." But I am entirely satisfied by that full declaration which you make : "I do not know of any impression that has been made upon me to your disadvantage."

I had once the opportunity of speaking a few minutes to you on the head of Christian perfection ; and I believe you had not much objection to any thing which was then spoken. When I spoke nearly to the same effect to **one** of the late bishops of London, Bishop Gibson, he said earnestly, "Why, Mr. Wesley, if this is what you mean by perfection, who can be against it?" I believe, verily, there would need no more than a single hour, spent in free and open conversation, to convince you that none can rationally or Scripturally say any thing against the perfection I have preached for thirty years.

The union which I desire among the persons I mentioned is an entire union of heart, constraining them to labour together as one man in spreading vital religion through the nation. But this I do not hope for, though I know a few who would cordially rejoice therein. The union which I proposed is of a lower kind : I proposed that they should love as brethren, and behave as such. And I particularized what I think is implied in this ; I imagined in so plain a

manner as was hardly possible, without great skill, to be either misunderstood or misrepresented. I really do not conceive what ambiguity there can be in any part of this proposal; or what objection can lie against our going thus far, whether we go farther or no.

With regard to you, I have frequently observed that there are two very different ranks of Christians, both of whom may be in the favour of God,—a higher and a lower rank. The latter avoid all known sin, do much good, use all the means of grace, but have little of the life of God in their souls, and are much conformed to the world. The former make the Bible their whole rule, and their sole aim is the will and image of God. This they steadily and uniformly pursue, through honour and dishonour, denying themselves, and taking up their cross daily; considering one point only, “How may I attain most of the mind that was in Christ, and how may I please him most?” Now, I verily believe, never was a person of rank more prepared for this state than you were the first time I had the pleasure of seeing you. Nay, I doubt not but you pant after it now; your soul is athirst to be all devoted to God. But who will press you forward to this? Rather, who will not draw you back? It is in this respect that I think one that uses plain dealing is needful for you in the highest degree; so needful that without this help you will inevitably stop short. I do not mean, stop short of heaven; but of that degree of holiness, and, consequently, of happiness both in time and eternity, which is now offered to your acceptance.

It is herein that I am jealous over you. I am afraid of your sinking beneath your calling, degenerating into a common Christian, who shall indeed be saved, but saved as by fire. I long to see both you and your lady a little more than common Christians; Christians of the first rank in the kingdom of God, full of all goodness and truth. I want you to be living witnesses of all gospel holiness! And what shall hinder, if you seek it by faith? Are not all things

ready? The Lord God give you to experience that all things are possible to them that believe!

“O God, let *all* their life declare
How happy these thy servants are;
How far above these earthly things;
How pure when wash'd in Jesus' blood;
How intimately one with God,
A heaven-born race of priests and kings!”

LVII.—TO MR. JOHN TREMBATH.

Tiverton, September 21, 1755.

THE plain reason why I did not design to speak with you at Launceston was, because I had no hope of doing you good. I observed long ago that you are not patient of reproof; and I fear you are less so now than ever. But since you desire it, I will tell you once more what I think, fear, or hear concerning you.

I think you tasted of the powers of the world to come thirteen or fourteen years ago, and was then simple of heart, and willing to spend and be spent for Christ. But not long after, not being sufficiently on your guard, you suffered loss by being applauded. This revived and increased your natural vanity, which was the harder to be checked, because of your constitutional stubbornness;—two deadly enemies which have lain in wait for you many years, and have given you many deep, if not mortal wounds.

I fear it is near ten years since you was so weakened by these that you no longer set a watch over your mouth; but began frequently to speak what was not strictly true to excuse yourself, divert others, or gain applause. I am afraid this has prevailed over you more and more, as there was less and less of the life of God in the soul; so that I should almost wonder if you do not judge a diverting lie to be a very innocent thing.

After your first marriage, being not used to nor fond of reading, and not spending many hours in private prayer,

time grew heavy on your hands ; especially as you could not bear the cross of being a regular travelling preacher : so you betook yourself to farming, and other country employments, and grew more and more dead to God,—especially when you began to keep company (whether by necessity or choice) with the men “ whose talk is of bullocks ;” who have little to do either with religion or reason, and have but just wit enough to smoke, drink, and flatter you.

By these dull wretches you have been an unspeakable loser. Perhaps it was in company with some of these that you first thought of taking a little sport, and catching a few fish, or killing a partridge or a hare. Miserable employment for a preacher of the gospel ! for a Methodist preacher, above all others ! Though I do not at all wonder, if, after practising it for some time, you should be so infatuated as even to defend it. I am afraid these same poor creatures afterward taught you (if that report be true) even to countenance that wickedness for which Cornwall stinks in the nostrils of all who fear God, or love King George ; I mean that of smuggling ; though surely they could not persuade you to receive stolen goods ! That is an iniquity to be punished by the judges. Is there any truth in that other charge, (you must not ask who tells me so ; if so, I have done,) that you imposed on Mrs. H——, in the writings, and fraudulently procured £100 a year to be engaged for, instead of fourscore ? I hope this was a mistake, as well as that assertion, that you encouraged drunkenness by suffering it in your company, if not in your own house.

O remember from whence you are fallen ! Repent, and do the first works ! First recover the life of God in your own soul, and walk as Christ walked. Walk with God as you did twelve years ago. Then you might again be useful to his children. Supposing you was truly alive to God yourself, how profitably then (leaving the dead to bury their dead) might you spend three months in a year at Bristol or London, three in Cornwall, and six in spreading the

gospel wherever it might be needful! I have now told you all that is in my heart: I hope you will receive it, not only with patience, but profit.

You must be much in the way, or much out of the way; a good soldier for God, or for the devil. O choose the better part!—now!—to-day!

LVIII.—TO THE SAME.

Cork, August 17, 1760.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—The conversation I had with you yesterday, in the afternoon, gave me a good deal of satisfaction. As to some things which I had heard, (with regard to your wasting your substance, drinking intemperately, and wronging the poor people at Silberton,) I am persuaded they were mistakes; as I suppose it was, that you converse much with careless, unawakened people. And I trust you will be more and more cautious in all these respects, abstaining from the very appearance of evil.

That you had not always attended the preaching when you might have done it, you allowed; but seemed determined to remove that objection; as well as the other, of using such exercises or diversions as give offence to your brethren. I believe you will likewise endeavour to avoid light and trifling conversation, and to talk and behave in all company with that seriousness and usefulness which become a preacher of the gospel.

Certainly, some years ago you was alive to God. You experienced the life and power of religion. And does not God intend that the trials you meet with should bring you back to this? You cannot stand still; you know this is impossible. You must go forward or backward. Either you must recover that power, and be a Christian altogether, or in a while you will have neither power nor form, inside nor outside.

Extremely opposite both to one and the other is that

aptness to ridicule others, to make them contemptible, by exposing their real or supposed foibles. This I would earnestly advise you to avoid. It hurts yourself; it hurts the hearers; and it greatly hurts those who are so exposed, and tends to make them your irreconcilable enemies. It has also sometimes betrayed you into speaking what was not strictly true. O beware of this above all things! Never amplify, never exaggerate any thing. Be rigorous in adhering to truth. Be exemplary therein. Whatever has been in time past, let all men now know that John Trembath abhors lying; that he never promises any thing which he does not perform; that his word is equal to his bond. I pray, be exact in this. Be a pattern of truth, sincerity, and godly simplicity.

What has exceedingly hurt you in time past, nay, and I fear to this day, is want of reading. I scarce ever knew a preacher read so little. And, perhaps, by neglecting it, you have lost the taste for it. Hence your talent in preaching does not increase. It is just the same as it was seven years ago: it is lively, but not deep; there is little variety; there is no compass of thought. Reading only can supply this, with meditation and daily prayer. You wrong yourself greatly by omitting this. You can never be a deep preacher without it, any more than a thorough Christian. O begin! Fix some part of every day for private exercises. You may acquire the taste which you have not: what is tedious at first will afterward be pleasant. Whether you like it or no, read and pray daily. It is for your life. There is no other way; else you will be a trifler all your days, and a pretty, superficial preacher. Do justice to your own soul; give it time and means to grow. Do not starve yourself any longer. Take up your cross, and be a Christian altogether. Then will all the children of God rejoice (not grieve) over you; and, in particular,

Yours, &c.

LIX.—TO MR. KNOX.

Sligo, May 30, 1765

DEAR SIR,—Probably this will be the last trouble of the kind which you will receive from me. If you receive it in the same spirit wherein it is wrote, I shall be glad. If not, my reward is with the Most High. I did not choose it should be delivered till I was gone, lest you should think I wanted something from you. By the blessing of God, I want nothing, only that you should be happy in time and in eternity.

Still I cannot but remember the clear light you had with regard to the nature of real, Scriptural Christianity. You saw what heart-religion meant, and the gate of it, justification. You had earnest desires to be a partaker of the whole gospel blessing; and you discovered the sincerity of those desires by the steps you took in your family. So that in every thing you was hastening to be not almost, but altogether, a Christian.

Where is that light now? Do you now see that true religion is not a negative or an external thing, but the life of God in the soul of man; the image of God stamped upon the heart? Do you now see that, in order to this, we are justified freely, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus? Where are the desires after this which you once felt? the hungering and thirsting after righteousness? And where are the outward marks of a soul groaning after God, and refusing to be comforted with any thing less than his love?

Will you say, "But if I had gone on in that way, I should have lost my friends and my reputation?" This is partly true. You would have lost most of those friends who neither love nor fear God. Happy loss! These are the men who do you more hurt than all the world besides. These are the men whom, if ever you would be a real Christian, you must avoid as you would avoid hell fire. "But then they will censure me." So they will. They will say you

are a fool, a madman, and what not. But what are you the worse for this? Why, the Spirit of glory and of Christ shall rest upon you. "But it will hurt me in my business." Suppose it should, the favour of God would make large amends. But very probably it would not. For the winds and the seas are in God's hands, as well as the hearts of men. "But it is inconsistent with my duty to the church." Can a man of understanding talk so, and talk so in earnest? Is it not rather a copy of his countenance? Indeed, if you mean, "inconsistent with my pleasing this or that clergyman," I allow it. But let them be pleased or displeased, please thou God. But are these clergymen the church? Unless they are holy men, earnestly loving and serving God, they are not even members of the church; they are no part of it. And unless they preach the doctrines of the church, contained in her articles and liturgy, they are no true ministers of the church, but are eating her bread and tearing out her bowels!

"But you will not leave the church." You never will by my advice: I advise just the contrary: I advise you to lose no opportunity of attending the service of the church, and receiving the Lord's supper, and of showing your regard for all her appointments. I advise steadily to adhere to her doctrine in every branch of it, particularly with regard to the two fundamental points,—justification by faith, and holiness. But above all, I cannot but earnestly entreat you not to rest till you experience what she teaches; till (to sum up all in one word) God cleanses the thoughts of your heart by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit, that you may perfectly love him, and worthily magnify his holy name. Unless this be done, what will it profit you to increase your fortune, to preserve the fairest reputation, and to gain the favour of the most learned, the most ingenious, and the most honourable clergymen in the kingdom? What will it profit a man to gain all these, and to lose his own soul?

I know that to God all things are possible; therefore it

is possible you may take this kindly. If so, I shall hope to receive a line from you. If not, let it be forgotten till we meet at the judgment seat of Christ.

I am, dear sir,

Your affectionate servant

LX.—TO MRS. MAITLAND.

May 12, 1763.

DEAR MADAM,—Both in the former and in the “Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection,” I have said all I have to say on that subject. Nevertheless, as you seem to desire I should, I will add a few words more.

As to the word *perfection*, it is Scriptural; therefore neither you nor I can in conscience object to it, unless we would send the Holy Ghost to school, and teach Him to speak who made the tongue.

By Christian perfection I mean (as I have said again and again) the so loving God and our neighbour as to “rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in every thing give thanks.” He that experiences this is Scripturally perfect. And if you do not, yet you may experience it: you surely will, if you follow hard after it; for the Scripture cannot be broken.

What, then, does their arguing reprove, who object against Christian perfection? Absolute or infallible perfection I never contended for. Sinless perfection I do not contend for, seeing it is not Scriptural. A perfection such as enables a person to fulfil the whole law, and so needs not the merits of Christ,—I acknowledge no such perfection: I do now, and always did, protest against it.

“But is there no sin in those who are perfect in love?” I believe not: but be that as it may, they feel none: no temper contrary to pure love, while they rejoice, pray, and give thanks continually. And whether sin is suspended, or extinguished, I will not dispute: it is enough that they feel nothing but love. This you allow we should daily

press after. And this is all I contend for. O may the Lord give you to taste of it to-day!

LXI.—TO MR. HART.

July 11, 1763.

DEAR SIR,—Abundance of business has prevented my writing so soon as I desired and intended; nor have I time now to write so largely as I could wish, and as your openness and frankness would otherwise constrain me to do. But I cannot delay any longer to write a little, lest I should seem to slight your correspondence.

What you before observed is of great importance, viz., “If it be the professed aim of the gospel to convince us that Jesus is the Christ; if I, a sinner, am convinced of the reality of this fact; am not I who believe authorized to expect life, not through any condition, or any act, inward or outward, performed by me, but singly through the name which Jesus assumed, which stands for his whole character or merit?”

Here is the hinge on which Mr. Sandiman’s whole system turns. This is the strength of his cause, and you have proposed it with all the strength and clearness which he himself could devise.

Yet suffer me to offer to your consideration a few queries concerning it:—

Is every one who is convinced of the reality of this fact, “Jesus is the Christ,” a gospel believer? Is not the devil convinced of the reality of this fact? Is, then, the devil a gospel believer?

I was convinced of the reality of this fact when I was twelve years old, when I was without God in the world. Was I then a gospel believer? Was I then a child of God? Was I then in a state of salvation?

Again, you say, “I who believe am authorized to expect life, not through any condition or act, inward or outward, performed by me.”

I who believe. But cannot you as well expect it without believing? If not, what is believing but a condition? For it is something *sine quâ non*. And what else do you, or I, or any one living, mean by a condition? And is not believing an inward act? What is it else? But you say, *Not performed by me.* By whom, then? God gives me the power to believe. But does he believe for me? He works faith in me. But still is it not I that believe? And if so, is not believing an inward act performed by me?

Is not then this hypothesis (to waive all other difficulties) contradictory to itself?

I have just set down a few hints as they occurred.

LXII.—TO MISS T——.

Bristol, September 29, 1764.

DEAR SISTER,—In the “Thoughts upon Christian Perfection,” you have a clear and consistent account of it. I have been grieved at the danger I saw you in, of stopping short of it. Certainly you may attain that blessing soon. And I am thoroughly persuaded you did taste of it, though how you lost it I know not.

It will be eternally true, “If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.” Have this faith, and you have salvation. And this is the very thing you want. When this is joined with a strong understanding, it is well; but it may exist with a very weak one. This is the case with Mrs. W——, whose understanding is extremely weak; and yet she has strong faith, and such as exceedingly profits me; though I take knowledge that the treasure is in an earthen vessel. I see all that is of nature; but this does not hinder my rejoicing in that which is of grace. This is one branch of Christian simplicity. While reason, assisted from above, enables me to discern the precious from the vile, I make my full use of the former, without losing one moment in thinking upon the latter. Perhaps, reason enlightened makes me simple. If I knew

less of human nature, (forgive me for talking so much of myself,) I should be more apt to stumble at the weaknesses of it: and if I have (by nature or by grace) some clearness of apprehension, it is owing to this, (under God,) that I never staggered at all the reveries of George Bell. I saw instantly at the beginning, and from the beginning, what was right and what was wrong. But I saw withal, "I have many things to say unto you, but you cannot hear them now." Hence many imagined I was imposed upon, and applauded themselves for their greater perspicuity, as they do at this day. "But if you knew it," says his friend to Gregory Lopez, "why did you not tell me?" I answer with him, "I do not speak all I know, but all I judge needful." Still I am persuaded there is no state under heaven from which it is not possible to fall. But I wish you was all love, and then you would not need to take any thought for the morrow.

LXIII.—TO MISS L——.

1. You want to know God, in order to enjoy him in time and in eternity.

2. All that you want to know of him is contained in one book, the Bible. Therefore your one point is to understand this. And all you learn is to be referred to this, as either directly or remotely conducive to it.

3. Might it not be well then to spend at least two hours every day in reading and meditating upon the Bible? reading every morning (if not every evening too) a portion of the Old and then of the New Testament? If you would save yourself the trouble of thinking, add Mr. Henry's Comment; if you would only be assisted in thinking, add the "Explanatory Notes."

4. But I find a difficulty already. Can you help me over it? Have you more candour than almost any one in the world? Will you not blame me for recommending, as they come in the way, tracts published by myself? I think

you will not. So I will set down these (in their place) as freely as other books.

5. Your studying hours (if your constitution will bear it) might be five or six hours a day. Perhaps from nine to twelve in the morning, and from two to four or five in the afternoon. And whenever you begin to be tired with books that require a strong and deep attention, relax your mind by interposing history or poetry, or something of a lighter nature.

6. The first thing you should understand a little of is grammar; in order to which it will suffice to read first the Kingswood "English Grammar," (which is exceedingly short,) and then Bishop Lowth's "Introduction."

7. Next it would be worth your while to acquire a little knowledge in arithmetic; and Dilworth's Arithmetic would give you full as much as you want.

8. You might proceed to geography. But in this I would not advise you to encumber yourself with many books. You need only master one, Randal's "Geographical Grammar," and then betake yourself to the globes. I believe those of Mr. Adams are the best; to which you may add his little book of instructions.

9. Logic naturally follows; and I really think it is worth all the rest put together. But here I am at a full stop; for I know no good treatise on the subject in English, except Aldrich's Logic, and that, I am afraid, you cannot understand without an instructor. I shall be glad to give you a little assistance in the short time we have together.

10. As to ethics, (or moral philosophy,) there is full as much of it as you want in Langbain's "Compendium."

11. In natural philosophy you have a larger field. You may begin with a "Survey of the Wisdom of God in the Creation." This contains the substance of Ray, Derham, Niewentyt, "Nature Displayed," and all the other celebrated books on the subject. You may add that fine book, Mr. Jones's "Principles of Natural Philosophy." Thence you will easily pass to the Glasgow abridgment

of Mr. Hutchinson's Works. The abridgers give not only all his sense, but all his spirit. You may add to these the beautiful tracts of Lord Forbes; and if you would go a little farther, Mr. Baker's ingenious "Treatise on the Microscope."

12. With any or all of the foregoing studies you may intermix that of history. Geography and chronology are termed the two eyes of history. Geography has been mentioned before; and I think all you want of chronology may be learned from Marshal's "Chronological Tables."

13. You may begin with Rollin's "Ancient History;" and afterward read in order Puffendorf's "Introduction to the History of Europe," the "Concise Church History," Burnet's "History of the Reformation," the "Concise History of England," Clarendon's "History of the Great Rebellion," Neal's "History of the Puritans," his "History of New-England," and Solis's "History of the Conquest of Mexico."

14. Whitby's "Compendium of Metaphysics" will introduce you to that science. You may go on with Locke's "Essay on Human Understanding;" Bishop Browne on the "Nature, Procedure, and Limits of Human Understanding;" and Malebranche's "Search after Truth."

15. For poetry you may read Spenser's "Faery Queen;" Fairfax's or Hoole's "Godfrey of Bulloign;" select parts of Shakspeare; "Paradise Lost;" the "Night Thoughts;" and "Moral and Sacred Poems."

16. You are glad to begin and end with divinity. But I must not expatiate here. I will only recommend to your careful perusal Bishop Pearson upon the Creed, Mr. Nelson's "Sermons," and the "Christian Library."

This course of study, if you have the resolution to go through it, will, I apprehend, take you up three, four, or five years, according to the degree of your health and of your application. And you will then have knowledge enough for any reasonable Christian. But remember

before all, in all, and above all, your great point is to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent.

LXIV.—TO THE REV. MR. G——.

April 2, 1761.

REVEREND SIR,—I have no desire to dispute ; least of all with one whom I believe to fear God and work righteousness. And I have no time to spare. Yet I think it my duty to write a few lines with regard to those you sent to Mr. Bennet.

You therein say, “If you sent me the books to inform me of an error which I had publicly advanced, pardon me if I say I know numbers who call themselves Methodists assert their assurance of salvation at the very time they wallow in sins of the deepest die.” Permit me, sir, to speak freely. I do not doubt the fact. But, 1. Those who are connected with me do not call themselves Methodists. Others call them by that nickname, and they cannot help it ; but I continually warn them not to pin it upon themselves. 2. We rarely use that ambiguous expression of “Christ’s righteousness imputed to us.” 3. We believe a man may be a real Christian without being “assured of his salvation.” 4. We know no man can be assured of salvation while he lives in any sin whatever. 5. The wretches who talk in that manner are neither Methodists nor Moravians, but followers of William Cudworth, James Relly, and their associates, who abhor us as much as they do the pope, and ten times more than they do the devil. If you oppose these, so do I ; and have done privately and publicly for these twenty years.

But you say, “Such as do not profess this doctrine will not be affected by my sermon.” Indeed they will ; for the world (as you yourself did) lump all that are called Methodists together. Consequently whatever you then said of Methodists in general falls on us as well as them ; and so we are condemned for those very principles which we:

totally detest and abhor: a small part of the "Preservative" (had you taken the pains to read it) would have convinced you of this. "Did you send them to convince me of some important truth? I have the New Testament." So have I; and I have read it for above these fifty years, and for near forty with some attention. Yet I will not say that Mr. G—— may not convince me of some truth which I never yet learned from it. I want every help, especially from those who strive both to preach and to live the gospel. Yet certainly I must dissent from you, or you from me, wherever either conceives the other to vary from it. Some of my writings you "have read." But allow me to ask, Did you not read them with much prejudice, or little attention? Otherwise surely you would not have termed them "perplexing." Very few lay obscurity or intricacy to my charge. Those who do not allow them to be true, do not deny them to be plain. And if they believe me to have done any good at all by writing, they suppose it is by this very thing, by speaking on practical and experimental religion more plainly than others have done.

I quite agree, we "neither can be better men nor better Christians than by continuing members of the Church of England." And not only her doctrines, but many parts of her discipline, I have adhered to at the hazard of my life. If in any point I have since varied therefrom, it was not by choice, but necessity. Judge, therefore, if they do well who throw me into the ditch, and then beat me because my clothes are dirty.

Wishing you much of the love of God in your heart, and much of his presence in your labours,

I am, reverend sir,

Your affectionate brother.

LXV.—TO THE REV. MR. D——.

Liverpool, April 6, 1761.

DEAR SIR,—Let who will speak, if what is spoken be true, I am ready to subscribe it. If it be not, I accept no man's person. *Magis amica veritas*.* I had an agreeable conversation with Mr. Venn, who, I suppose, is now near you. I think he is exactly as regular as he ought to be. I would observe every punctilio of order, except where the salvation of souls is at stake. There I prefer the end before the means.

I think it great pity that the few clergymen in England who preach the three grand Scriptural doctrines—original sin, justification by faith, and holiness consequent thereon—should have any jealousies or misunderstandings between them. What advantage must this give to the common enemy! What a hinderance is it to the great work wherein they are all engaged! How desirable is it that there should be the most open, avowed intercourse between them! So far, indeed, as they judge it would be for the glory of God, they may openly declare wherein they disagree.

But surely if they are ashamed to own one another in the faces of all mankind, they are ashamed of Christ; they are ashamed of Him that sends, if they dare not avow whom he has sent. Excuses, indeed, will never be wanting. But will these avail before God? For many years I have been labouring after this; labouring to unite, not scatter, the messengers of God. Not that I want any thing from them. As God has enabled me to stand almost alone for these twenty years, I doubt not but he will enable me to stand, either with them or without them. But I want all to be helpful to each other, and all the world to know we are so. Let them know who is on the Lord's side. You, I trust, will always be of that number. O let us preach and live the whole gospel! The grace of our Lord be with your spirit!

* I prefer truth to the dearest friend.—Ed.

LXVI.—TO MRS. R——.

Whitehaven, June 28, 1765.

MY DEAR SISTER,—For some time I have been convinced it was my duty to tell you what was on my mind. I will do it with all plainness. You may answer or not, as you judge best.

Many things I have observed in you which gave me pleasure; some which gave me concern: the former I need not mention; the latter I must, or I should not myself be clear before God.

The first of these is something which looks like pride. You sometimes seem to think too highly of yourself, and (comparatively) to despise others. I will instance in two or three particulars:—

1. You appear to be above instruction—I mean instruction from man. I do not doubt but you are taught of God. But that does not supersede your being taught by man also. I believe there is no saint upon earth whom God does not teach by man.

2. You appear to think (I will not affirm you do) that none understands the doctrine of sanctification like you. Nay, you sometimes speak as if none understood it besides you: whereas (whether you experience more or less of it than some) I know several, both men and women, who both think and speak full as Scripturally of it as you do; and perhaps more clearly; for there is often something dark and confused in your manner of speaking concerning it.

3. You appear to undervalue the experience of almost every one in comparison of your own. To this it seems to be owing, that you, some way or other, beat down almost all who believe they are saved from sin. And so some of them were, in the only sense wherein I either teach or believe it, unless they tell flat and wilful lies in giving an account of their experience.

A second thing which has given me concern is, I am afraid you are in danger of enthusiasm. We know there are divine dreams and impressions. But how easily may you be deceived herein! How easily, where something is from God, may we mix something which is from nature! especially if we have a lively imagination, and are not aware of any danger.

I will mention one thing more. It has frequently been said, and with some appearance of truth, that you endeavour to monopolize the affections of all that fall into your hands; that you destroy the nearest and dearest connection they had before, and make them quite cool and indifferent to their most intimate friends. I do not at all speak on my own account; I set myself out of the question. But if there be any thing of the kind with regard to other people, I should be sorry, both for them and you.

I commend you all to God, and to the word of his grace.

LXVII.—TO THE REV. MR. WANLEY, DEAN OF RIPON.

Yarm, July 9, 1766.

REVEREND SIR,—The regard which I owe to a fellow Christian, and much more to a clergyman and a magistrate, constrains me to trouble you with a few lines, though I have no personal acquaintance with you. Ralph Bell has just been giving me an account of the late affair at Ripon. What he desires is, 1. To have the loss he has sustained repaired; and, 2. Liberty of conscience; that liberty which every man may claim as his right by the law of God and nature; and to which every Englishman, in particular, has a right by the laws of his country. I well know the advantage these laws give *us* in the present case: I say *us*, because I make the case my own; as I think it my bounden duty to do. I have had many suits in the king's bench; and, blessed be God, I never lost one yet. But I would far rather put an amicable end to any dispute, where it can be done: not that I am afraid of being over-

borne by the expense ; if I am not, I know them that are, able to bear it. But I love peace. I love my neighbour as myself ; and would not willingly bring loss or trouble upon any man. Be so good as to impute to this motive my interfering in this matter.

I am, reverend sir,

Your servant for Christ's sake.

LXVIII.—TO MRS. EMMA MOON, YARM.

Norwich, December 6, 1767.

MY DEAR SISTER,—I can easily believe that nothing would be wanting to me which it was in your power to supply : for I am persuaded your heart is as my heart, as is the case with all the “souls whom Himself vouchsafes to unite in fellowship divine.” What is always in your power is, to bear me before the throne of grace. One thing in particular which I frequently desire is, “a calm evening of a various day ;” that I may have no conflicts *at the last*, but rather, if God sees good, before “my flesh and my heart faileth.”

In every place where Mr. Whitefield has been he has laboured in the same friendly, Christian manner. God has indeed effectually broken down the wall of partition which was between us. Thirty years ago we were one : then the sower of tares rent us asunder : but now a stronger than him has made us one again.

There is no weakness either in our body or mind, but Satan endeavours to avail himself of it. That kind of dulness or listlessness I take to be originally a pure effect of bodily constitution. As such, it is not imputable to us in any degree, unless we give way to it. So long as we diligently resist, it is no more blameable than sleepiness, or weariness of body.

Do many of those who were saved from sin in your neighbourhood stand fast in their liberty ? or have one-half, if not the greater part, been moved from their stead-

fastness? How is it that so many are moved? that in many places so few, comparatively, stand? Have you lately conversed with sister Heslop? Does she retain all the life she had? Does John Eland? and some others at Hutton?

Peace be multiplied upon you!

LXIX.—TO THE SAME.

London, January 24, 1768.

MY DEAR SISTER,—Formerly, when persons reproached me for doing thus and thus, I have very frequently said, “In truth, I have not done it yet; but, by the grace of God, I will.” This seems to be the very case with you. You are accused for what you did not, but ought to have done. You ought to have informed me from time to time, not indeed of trifles, or idle reports, but of things which you judged to be a real hinderance to the work of God. And God permitted you to be reminded of this omission by those who intended nothing less.

Opposition from their brethren has been one cause why so many who were set free have not retained their liberty. But perhaps there was another more general cause: they had not proper help. One just saved from sin is like a new-born child, and needs as careful nursing. But these had it not. How few were as nursing fathers! How few cherished them as a nurse her own children! So that the greater part were weakened, if not destroyed, before their sinews were knit, for want of that prudent and tender care which their state necessarily required. Do all that you can to cherish them that are left; and never forget

Your affectionate brother.

LXX.—TO A MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY.

March 4, 1760.

CERTAINLY the more freedom you use, the more advantage you will find. But at the same time it will be needful

continually to remember from whom every good and perfect gift cometh. If He blesses our intercourse with each other, then we shall never repent of the labour.

It is a blessing indeed when God uncovers our hearts, and clearly shows us what spirit we are of. But there is no manner of necessity that this self-knowledge should make us miserable. Certainly the highest degree of it is well consistent both with peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Therefore how deeply soever you may be convinced of pride, self-will, peevishness, or any other inbred sin, see that you do not let go that confidence, whereby you may still rejoice in God your Saviour. Some, indeed, have been quite unhappy, though they retained their faith, through desire on the one hand, and conviction on the other. But that is nothing to you: you need never give up any thing which you have already received; you will not, if you keep close to that,—

“For this my vehement soul stands still;
Restless, resign’d, for this I wait.”

We have a fuller, clearer knowledge of our own members than of those belonging to other societies; and may therefore, without any culpable partiality, have a better opinion of them.

It is a great thing to spend all our time to the glory of God. But you need not be scrupulous as to the precise time of reading and praying; I mean as to the dividing it between one and the other. A few minutes, one way or the other, are of no great importance.

May He who loves you fill you with his pure love!

LXXI.—TO THE SAME.

March 29, 1760.

HAVING a little longer reprieve, I snatch the opportunity of writing a few lines before we embark. Prayer is certainly the grand means of drawing near to God; and all

others are helpful to us only so far as they are mixed with, or prepare us for, this. The comfort of it may be taken away by wandering thoughts, but not the benefit: violently to fight against these is not the best and speediest way to conquer them; but, rather, humbly and calmly to ask and wait for His help who will bruise Satan under your feet. You may undoubtedly remain in peace and joy until you are perfected in love. You need neither enter into a dispute when persons speak wrong, nor yet betray the truth: there is a middle way. You may simply say, "I believe otherwise; but I think, and let think; I am not fond of contending on this or any other head, lest I receive more hurt than I can do good." Remember your calling; be

"A simple follower of the Lamb,
And harmless as a little child."

LXXII.—TO THE SAME.

April 16, 1760.

ELTHAM is a barren soil indeed. I fear scarce any are to be found there who know any thing of the power of religion; and not many that have so much as the form. But God is there; and he can supply every want. Nothing contributes to seriousness more than humility, because it is a preparation for every fruit of the Holy Spirit; and the knowledge of our desperate state by sin has a particular tendency to keep us earnest after deliverance; and that earnestness can hardly consist with levity, either of temper or behaviour.

Those who have tasted of the goodness of God are frequently wanting in declaring it. They do not, as they ought, stir up the gift of God which is in every believer by exciting one another to continual thankfulness, and provoking each other to love and good works. We should never be content to make a drawn battle, to part neither better nor worse than we met. Christian conversation is too precious a talent to be thus squandered away.

It does not require a large share of natural wisdom to see God in all things; in all his works of creation as well as of providence. This is rather a branch of spiritual wisdom, and is given to believers more and more as they advance in purity of heart.

Probably it would be of use to you to be as regular as you can: I mean, to allot such hours to such employments, only not to be troubled when Providence calls you from them. For the best rule of all is, to follow the will of God.

LXXIII.—TO THE SAME.

June 27, 1760.

A DAY or two ago I was quite surprised to find among my papers a letter of yours, which I apprehend I have not answered.

Every one, though born of God in an instant, yea, and sanctified in an instant, yet undoubtedly grows by slow degrees, both after the former and the latter change. But it does not follow from thence that there must be a considerable tract of time between the one and the other. A year or a month is the same with God as a thousand. If he wills, to do is present with him; much less is there any necessity for much suffering: God can do his work by pleasure as well as by pain. It is therefore undoubtedly our duty to pray and look for full salvation every day, every hour, every moment, without waiting till we have either done or suffered more. Why should not this be the accepted time?

Certainly your friend will suffer loss if he does not allow himself time every day for private prayer. Nothing will supply the want of this: praying with others is quite another thing. Besides, it may expose us to great danger; it may turn prayer into an abomination to God; for

“Guilty we speak, if subtle from within
Blows on our words the self-admiring sin!”

O make the best of every hour!

LXXIV.—TO THE SAME.

November 11, 1760.

CONVICTION is not condemnation. You may be convinced, yet not condemned ; convinced of useless thoughts or words, and yet not condemned for them. You are condemned for nothing if you love God, and continue to give him your whole heart.

Certainly, spiritual temptations will pass through your spirit ; else you could not feel them. I believe I understand your state better than you do yourself. Do not perplex yourself at all about what you shall call it. You are a child of God, a member of Christ, an heir of the kingdom. What you have, hold fast, (whatever name is given to it,) and you shall have all that God has prepared for them that love him. Certainly you do need more faith ; for you are a tender, sickly plant. But see,—

“ Faith while yet you ask is given :
God comes down, the God and Lord
That made both earth and heaven ! ”

You cannot live on what he did yesterday. Therefore he comes to-day ! He comes to destroy that tendency to levity, to severe judging, to any thing that is not of God.

Peace be with your spirit !

LXXV.—TO THE SAME

December 12, 1760.

You may blame yourself, but I will not blame you, for seeking to have your every temper, and thought, and word, and work, suitable to the will of God. But I doubt not you seek this by faith, not without it ; and you seek it in and through Christ, not without him. Go on ; you shall have all you seek, because God is love. He is showing you the littleness of your understanding, and the foolish-

ness of all natural wisdom. Certainly peace and joy in believing are the grand means of holiness ; therefore love and value them as such.

“ Why is the law of works superseded by the law of love ?” Because Christ died. “ Why are we not condemned for coming short even of this ?” Because he lives and intercedes for us. I believe it is impossible not to come short of it, through the unavoidable littleness of our understanding. Yet the blood of the covenant is upon us, and therefore there is no condemnation.

I think the extent of the law of love is exactly marked out in the thirteenth of the Corinthians. Let faith fill your heart with love to Him and all mankind ; then follow this loving faith to the best of your understanding ; meantime crying out continually, “ Jesus is all in all to me.”

LXXVI.—TO THE SAME.

June 17, 1761.

I APPREHEND your great danger now is this, to think you never shall receive that blessing, because you have not received it yet. Nay, perhaps you may be tempted to believe that there is no such thing, and that those who thought they had received it were mistaken as well as you. This danger will be increased, if some who professed to be sanctified long ago, and yet have not received this blessing, affirm there is no such thing, and begin to warn others against falling into this delusion. But keep close to your rule, the word of God, and to your guide, the Spirit of God, and never be afraid of expecting too much : as yet you are but a babe. O what heights of holiness are to come ! I hope you do not forget to pray for me. Adieu !

LXXVII.—TO THE SAME.

May 13, 1762.

You did well to write. “ It is good to hide the secrets of a king ; but to declare the loving-kindness of the Lord.”

Have you never found any wandering since? Is your mind always stayed on God? Do you find every thought brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ? Do no vain thoughts (useless, trifling, unedifying) lodge within you? Does not the corruptible body at some times, more or less, press down the soul? Has God made your very dreams devout? I have known Satan assault in their sleep (endeavouring to terrify or affright) those whom he could not touch when they were awake.

As to your band, there are two sorts of persons with whom you may have to do,—the earnest and the slack: the way you are to take with the one is quite different from that one would take with the other. The latter you must search, and find out why they are slack; exhort them to repent, be zealous, do the first works. The former you have only to encourage, to exhort, to push forward to the mark, to bid them grasp the prize so nigh! And do so yourself. Receive a thousand more blessings; believe more, love more: you cannot love enough. Beware of sins of omission. So shall you fulfil the joy of

Your affectionate brother.

LXXVIII.—TO THE SAME.

April 7, 1763.

THE true gospel touches the very edge both of Calvinism and Antinomianism; so that nothing but the mighty power of God can prevent our sliding either into the one or the other.

The nicest point of all which relates to Christian perfection is that which you inquire of. Thus much is certain: they that love God with all their heart, and all men as themselves, are Scripturally perfect. And surely such there are; otherwise the promise of God would be a mere mockery of human weakness. Hold fast this: but then remember, on the other hand, you have this treasure in an earthen vessel; you dwell in a poor, shattered house of

clay, which presses down the immortal spirit. Hence all your thoughts, words, and actions are so imperfect; so far from coming up to the standard, (that law of love which, but for the corruptible body, your soul would answer in all instances,) that you may well say, till you go to Him you love,—

“Every moment, Lord, I need
The merit of thy death.”

LXXIX.—TO THE SAME.

October 13, 1764.

I do not see that you can speak otherwise than you do in your band. If you sought their approbation, that would be wrong; but you may suffer it without blame. Indeed, in these circumstances you must, since it is undeniably plain that the doing otherwise would hurt rather, than help their souls. I believe Miss F—— thought she felt evil before she did, and by that very thought gave occasion to its re-entrance. You ought not to speak explicitly to many: very few would understand or know how to advise you. For some time I thought M—— did, and was therefore glad of your acquaintance with him, hoping he would lead you by the hand in a more profitable manner than I was able to do. But I afterward doubted. The Lord send you help by whom he will send!

From what not only you but many others likewise have experienced, we find there is very frequently a kind of wilderness state, not only after justification, but even after deliverance from sin; and I doubt whether the sermon upon that state might not give you light in this case also. But the most frequent cause of this second darkness or distress, I believe, is evil reasoning: by this, three in four of those who cast away their confidence are gradually induced so to do. And if this be the cause, is there any way to regain that deliverance but by resuming your confidence? And can you receive it unless you receive it

freely; not of works, but by mere grace? This is the way: walk thou in it. Dare to believe! Look up, and see thy Saviour near! When? to-morrow, or to-day? Nay, to-day hear his voice! At this time; at this place! Lord, speak; thy servant heareth!

LXXX.—TO THE SAME.

August 9, 1765.

I HAVE many fears concerning you, lest you should sink beneath the dignity of your calling, or be moved, to the right hand or the left, from the simplicity of the gospel. Is your heart still whole with God? Do you still desire and seek no happiness but in him? Are you always, or generally, sensible of his presence? Do you generally, at least, find communion with him? And do you expect all that you enjoyed once, and more; to be sanctified throughout before you go hence?

I hope no inward or outward reasonings are able to move you from walking exactly according to the gospel. O beware of voluntary humility; of thinking, "Such a one is better than me, and why should I pretend to be more strict than her?" "What is that to thee? follow thou me!" You have but one pattern: follow him inwardly and outwardly. If other believers will go step for step with you, well; but if not, follow him!

Peace be with your spirit.

LXXXI.—TO THE SAME.

August 31, 1765.

You may be assured it is not a small degree of satisfaction to me to hear that your soul prospers. I cannot be indifferent to any thing which concerns either your present or future welfare. As you covet, so I want you to enjoy, the most excellent gifts. To your outward walking I have no objection. But I want you to walk inwardly in the

fulness of love, and in the broad light of God's countenance What is requisite to this, but to believe always?—now to believe with your whole heart, and to hold fast the beginning of this confidence steadfast unto the end? And yet a self-complaisant thought, yea, or a blasphemous one, may steal across your spirit; but I will not say that is your own thought. Perhaps an enemy hath done this. Neither will I blame you for “feeling deeply the perverseness of others;” or for “feeling your spirit tried with it.” I do not wish that you should not feel it, (while it remains,) or that you should feel it otherwise than as a trial. But this does not prove that there is sin in your heart, or that you are not a sacrifice to love. O my friend, do justice to the grace of God! Hold fast whereunto you have attained; and if you have not yet uninterrupted communion with him, why not this moment, and from this moment? If you have not, I incline to think it is occasioned by reasoning, or by some inward or outward omission.

LXXXII.—TO THE SAME.

June 29, 1767.

For some days you have been much on my mind. Are you still making the best of life? employing a few days exactly in such a manner as you judge is most to the glory of God? And do you still hold fast what you have received, and expect the fulness of the promise? Surely you may retain all that earnestness of expectation to which Mr. M—— used to incite you, without any prejudice either to humility or sobriety of spirit. Doubtless it is possible, with Mr. Dryden's leave, “to be wise and love” at the same time; and neither of these need interfere with the other, seeing the spirit of love is also the spirit of wisdom. Are all your family breathing this spirit, and strengthening each other's hands in God? I hope you have the satisfaction of observing the same thing in most of those that are around about you, and of seeing the work of God prosper, wherever

you have occasion to be. When you are with the genteel part of your acquaintance, you have more immediate need of watching unto prayer, or you will insensibly drink into the lightness of their spirit, and abate a little of the accuracy of your walking. Nay, stand fast, walking in every point as Christ also walked. Fashion and custom are nothing to you; you have a more excellent rule. You are resolved to be a Bible Christian; and that, by the grace of God, not in some, but in all points. Go on, in the name of God, and in the power of his might. Still let your eye be single; aim at one point; retain and increase your communion with God! You have nothing else to do.

“Happy and wise, the time redeem,
And live, my friend, and die to him.”

At some times we must look at outward things; such is the present condition of humanity. But we have need quickly to return home; for what avails all, but Christ reigning in the heart?

“Daily in his grace to grow!”

What else have we to care for? Only now to use all the grace we have received, and now to expect all we want! The Lord Jesus swallow you up in his love!

LXXXIII.—TO THE SAME.

May, 1769.

By comparing your own outward state with Mrs. —, you now see clearly the advantages you enjoy: you have nothing external to hinder your waiting upon God without carefulness and without distraction. None has a right to interrupt you while you are exercised in things divine, and labouring to be holy in body and spirit. You may have just so much and no more connection with any one as experience shows is profitable for you. O stand fast

in this liberty, glorifying God with all you have and all you are!

It is remarkable that St. Paul places this the last of all, that "love endureth all things;" and this is the sum of his wish, with regard to the Colossians, "that they might be strengthened unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness." They who have attained this are ripe for the inheritance, and ready to salute their friends in light. There is a time when we grow up toward this, even without any sensible increase; as in the parable the seed groweth and springs up, he knoweth not how. At many times, indeed, we do know how the power of the Highest suddenly overshadows us; while either the first or the pure love is shed abroad in our hearts. But at other times he confirms and increases that love in a gradual and almost insensible manner.

Death has had a large commission this year, with regard to our societies in Ireland as well as England. Just as I left Dublin, four or five of our members there were taken away in four or five days: three elder, and two in the bloom of youth; one of whom had been filled with love for some years. They all witnessed a good confession at the last, and died in full assurance of hope. Nancy Rogers, whom I saw just before I left the town, breathed the very spirit of Jane Cooper. I think their kindred spirits are now acquainted with each other better than you and I are, but not better than we shall be when we meet together in the paradise of God.

LXXXIV.—TO THE SAME.

August 12, 1769.

At some times it is needful to say, "I will pray with the spirit and with the understanding also." At other times the understanding has little to do while the soul is poured forth in passive prayer. I believe we found the answer to many prayers at the conference, particularly on the two

last days. At the conclusion, all the preachers were melted down while they were singing those lines for me,—

“Thou who so long hast saved me here,
A little longer save ;
Till, freed from sin and freed from fear,
I sink into a grave.
Till glad I lay my body down,
Thy servant's steps attend ;
And, O, my life of mercies crown
With a triumphant end !”

Various scriptures show that we may pray with resignation for the life or ease of a friend: it is enough that every petition be closed with, “Not as I will, but as thou wilt.” It is true that a believer knows the devices of Satan to be many and various. But the apostle means more than this, namely, that those who have the unction of the Holy One are thereby enabled to discern his devices whenever they occur, and to distinguish them from the influences of the good Spirit, how finely soever they are disguised. To answer for ourselves is often a cross; and we had much rather let people think and talk as they please: but it is a cross we must often take up, otherwise we “walk not charitably,” if we do not “reprove our brother;” if we “suffer sin upon him,” we “hate our brother in our heart.”

If Mrs. — be arrived at London, I wish you would take the first opportunity of conversing with her. She will have more need of a faithful friend now than ever she had in her life. I expect she will hear reasons upon reasons why she ought, as a point of duty, to conform a little to the world, to have a few trifling acquaintance, and not to be so particular in her dress. Now, as you have heard all these things before, and have been enabled, by the grace of God, to discover Satan, even with his angel's face, and to stand firm against all his assaults, you will be better able to assist and confirm her, if you seek her before she is much shaken.

It has a little surprised me, that several who are, I believe, filled with love, yet do not desire to die. It seems as if God generally does not give this desire till the time of death approaches. Perhaps in many it would be of little use. First let them learn to live.

Doubtless that rest was given "to support you under your sickness." Yet that is no reason why it should be ever taken away: it was certainly a degree of that rest which remaineth for the people of God. But it may be called by this or any other name; names are of little consequence: the thing you need never let go. You may live in and to Jesus; yea, and that continually, by simple faith, and holy, humble love.

Let M—— T—— be as sensible as ever she will or can be of her own helplessness and poverty. But let her not cast away that confidence which hath great recompense of reward. She did experience the pure love of God: let none take advantage from her being tried by fire (if it should be so) to reason her out of it. That general promise, "In blessing I will bless thee," certainly contains all the promises, whether relating to this life or the next; and all are yours! Peace be multiplied upon you!

LXXXV.—TO THE SAME.

July 6, 1770.

WHEN things are viewed at a distance, one would be apt to imagine that no degree of sorrow could be found in a heart that rejoices evermore; that no right temper could be wanting, much less any degree of a wrong temper subsist, in a soul that is filled with love: and yet I am in doubt whether there be any soul clothed with flesh and blood which enjoys every right temper, and in which is no degree of any wrong one; suppose of ill-judged zeal, or more or less affection for some person than that person really deserves. When we say, "This is a natural, necessary consequence of the soul's union with a corruptible body,"

the assertion is by no means clear till we add, "because of the weakness of understanding which results from this union:" admitting this, the case is plain. There is so close a connection between right judgment and right tempers, as well as right practice, that the latter cannot easily subsist without the former. Some wrong temper, at least in a small degree, almost necessarily follows from wrong judgment: I apprehend when many say, "Sin must remain while the body remains," this is what they mean, though they cannot make it out.

You say, "My silence usually proceeds from my views and thoughts of myself as a Christian." Bishop Fenelon says, "Simplicity is that grace which frees the soul from all unnecessary reflections upon itself." See here one sort of simplicity which you want! When I speak or write to you, I have you before my eyes, but, generally speaking, I do not think of myself at all. I do not think whether I am wise or foolish, knowing or ignorant: but I see you aiming at glory and immortality, and say just what I hope may direct your goings in the way, and prevent your being weary or faint in your mind.

LXXXVI.—TO THE SAME.

September 15, 1770.

To use the grace given is the certain way to obtain more grace. To use all the faith you have will bring an increase of faith. But this word is of very wide extent: it takes in the full exercise of every talent wherewith we are intrusted. This comprises the whole compass both of inward and outward religion. That you may be able steadily and effectually to attend to this, you have need of that prayer, "Give me understanding, that I may keep thy law; yea, that I may keep it with my whole heart." This is to "make the best of life," which cannot be done without growing in grace. I believe it would help you to read and consider the sermon on self-denial, and

that on universal conscientiousness, in the "Christian Library."

A sense of wants and weaknesses, with various trials and temptations, will do you no real hurt, though they occasion heaviness for a time, and abate your joy in the Lord. It is wrong so to attend to this as to weaken your faith; and yet, in the general, it is not wrong "to form your estimate of the state of your soul from your sensations:" not, indeed, from these alone, but from these in conjunction with your words and actions. It is true we cannot judge of ourselves by the measure of our joy; the most variable of all our sensations, and frequently depending, in a great degree, on the state of our blood and spirits. But if you take love, joy, peace, meekness, gentleness, and resignation together, I know no surer rule whereby to judge of your state to Godward.

What is the difference between "the frame of my mind" and "the state of my soul?" Is there the difference of a hair's breadth? I will not affirm it. If there be any at all, perhaps it is this: the *frame* may mean a single, transient sensation; the *state*, a more complicated and lasting sensation,—something which we habitually feel. By *frame*, some may mean fleeting passions; by *state*, rooted tempers. But I do not know that we have any authority to use the terms thus, or to distinguish one from the other. He whose mind is in a good frame is certainly a good man as long as it so continues. I would therefore no more require you to cease from judging of your state by your frame of mind than I would require you to cease from breathing.

Unless you deal very closely with those committed to your care, you will not give an account of them with joy. Advices and admonitions at a distance will do little harm or good. To those who give into dress you might read or recommend the "Advice to the Methodists," on that head. It would be proper to go to the root of the matter once or twice; then to let it sleep, and after a few weeks try again.

A Methodist using fine or gay apparel must suffer loss in her soul, although she may retain a little life; but she never will attain a high degree either of holiness or happiness.

LXXXVII.—TO THE SAME.

May 31, 1771.

THE dealings of God with man are infinitely varied, and cannot be confined to any general rule: both in justification and sanctification he often acts in a manner we cannot account for.

There cannot be a more proper phrase than that you used, and I well understand your meaning; yet it is sure you are a transgressor still, namely, of the perfect, Adamic law. But though it be true, all sin is a transgression of this law, yet it is by no means true, on the other hand, (though we have so often taken it for granted,) that all transgressions of this law are sin: no, not at all; only all voluntary transgressions of it; none else are sins against the gospel law.

Although we have "faith's abiding impression, realizing things to come;" yet as long as we are in the body we have but an imperfect, shadowy knowledge of the things of eternity. For now we only see them in a glass, a mirror, which gives us no more than a shadow of them; therefore we see them darkly, or in a riddle, as St. Paul speaks. The whole invisible world is as yet a riddle to us; and it seems to be in this sense that some writers speak so much of the night or darkness of faith, namely, when opposed to sight; that is, to the view of things which we shall have when the veil of flesh and blood is removed.

Those reasonings concerning the measure of holiness (a curious, not useful question) are not inconsistent with pure love, but they tend to damp it; and were you to pursue them far, they would lead you into unbelief.

What you feel is certainly a degree of anger, but not of

sinful anger : there ought to be in us (as there was in our Lord) not barely a perception in the understanding that this or that is evil ; but also an emotion of mind, a sensation or passion suitable thereto. This anger at sin, accompanied with love and compassion to the sinner, is so far from being itself a sin, that it is rather a duty. St. Paul's word is, "not easily provoked" to any paroxysm of anger ; neither are you : nevertheless, I suppose there is in you, when you feel a proper anger at sin, a hurrying motion of the blood and spirits, which is an imperfection, and will be done away.

LXXXVIII.—TO THE SAME.

June 25, 1771.

UNDOUBTEDLY the reward which is purchased for us by the blood of the covenant will be proportioned to what we are, (through grace,) what we do, and what we suffer. Whatever, therefore, prevents our doing good, prevents our receiving so full a reward : and what can countervail that loss ? It is certainly right that we should bear one another's burdens ; that we should weep with them that weep, and for them that weep not for themselves. "When Jesus saw them weeping, he troubled himself ;" he willingly sustained that emotion ; he voluntarily suffered that sorrow : and it is good for us to tread in his steps. "But how far ?" Just so far as does not disqualify us for any other part of our duty ; so far as softens, not unnerves the mind ; as makes us more, not less zealous of good works.

Undoubtedly there are various kinds and various degrees of communion with God : we cannot confine it to one only ; it may take in the exercise of every affection, either single or variously mixed together ; and may run through all our outward employments. The most desirable prayer is that where we can pour out our soul, and freely talk with God. But it is not this alone which is acceptable to him. "I love one," said a holy man, "that perseveres in dry duty."

Beware of thinking even this is labour lost. God does much work in the heart even at those seasons.

“And when the soul, sighing to be approved,
Says, ‘Could I love,’ and stops, God writeth, ‘Loved!’”

And yet the comfort is, that you need not rest here: you may go on until all your heart is love; till you rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in every thing give thanks. You know this is the will of God concerning you, in Christ Jesus.

LXXXIX.—TO THE SAME.

July 13, 1771.

As long as we dwell in a house of clay it is liable to affect the mind; sometimes by dulling or darkening the understanding; and sometimes more directly by damping and depressing the soul, and sinking it into distress and heaviness. In this state, doubt or fear, of one kind or another, will naturally arise. And the prince of this world, who well knows whereof we are made, will not fail to improve the occasion, in order to disturb, though he cannot pollute, the heart which God hath cleansed from all unrighteousness.

In the thirteenth of Corinthians you have the height and depth of genuine perfection: and it is observable, St. Paul speaks all along of the love of our neighbour; flowing indeed from the love of God. Mr. De Renty is an excellent pattern of this. But many things in his fellowship with God will not be explained till the Holy Spirit explains them by writing them on your heart. That darkness which often clouds your understanding, I take to be quite preternatural. I believe the spirit of darkness spreads a mist over your mind, so far as he is permitted; and that the best remedy is simply to look up to God, and the cloud will flee away at his presence.

XC.—TO THE SAME.

August 3, 1771.

How wise are all the ways of God! and although in many instances they are past finding out, yet we may even now discern the designs of his providence.

The "Appendix to the Philosophy," and the "Trinity Hymns," I hope, will settle you on that important point. It is a striking remark of Bishop Browne's, that we are not required to "believe any mystery" in the matter. The mystery does not lie in the fact, "These three are one," but in the *manner*, the accounting how they are one. But with this I have nothing to do. I believe the fact. As to the manner, (wherein the whole mystery lies,) I believe nothing about it. The quaint device of styling them *three offices*, rather than *persons*, gives up the whole doctrine.

There is scarcely any word of so extensive a sense as wisdom. It frequently means the whole of religion. And indeed no one can be termed thoroughly wise until he is altogether a Christian. To devote all our thoughts and actions to God, this is our highest wisdom; and so far as we inwardly or outwardly swerve from this, we walk as fools, not as wise. In order to be all devoted to the Lord, even those who are renewed in love still need the unction of the Holy One to teach them in all circumstances the most excellent way, and to enable them so to watch and pray, that they may continually walk therein. It seems my time for writing either on this or other subjects is pretty well over; only I am ready to add a word now and then, if Providence so require.

Persons are, in one sense, delivered from unbelief when they are enabled to believe always; when they have faith's abiding impression, realizing things to come. For they can then no longer be termed unbelievers. When this is given in a very glorious manner, so that they are filled with faith, and are not able to doubt, even for a moment, it is natural for them to say they "are saved from all unbe-

lief." The soul that is all light, (as Lopez, when he said, "All is midday now,") may affirm, "I am saved from all darkness." And is not this the will of the Lord concerning you? Undoubtedly it is. Fear not, then; reason not; only look up. Is he not nigh, even at the door? He is nigh that justifieth; he is nigh that sanctifieth; he is nigh that supplies all your wants! Take more out of his fulness that you may love him more, praise him more, and serve him better. It is desirable to glorify God, like Mr. De Renty or Haliburton, in death as well as in life.

XCI.—TO THE SAME.

July 1, 1772.

It is lost time to consider whether you write well or ill: you speak from the heart, and that is enough. Unbelief is either total, the absence of faith; or partial, the want of more faith. In the latter sense every believer may complain of unbelief, unless when he is filled with faith and the Holy Ghost. Then it is all midday. Yet even then we may pray, "Lord, increase our faith."

We learn to think by reading and meditating on what we read; by conversing with sensible people; and by every thing that improves the heart. Since purity of heart (as Mr. Norris observes) both clears the medium through which we see, and strengthens the faculty, mechanical rules avail little, unless one had opportunity of learning the elements of logic; but it is a miserable task to learn them without an instructor.

Entire resignation implies entire love. Give him your will, and you give him your heart.

You need not be at all careful in that matter, whether you apply directly to one person or the other, seeing he and the Father are one. Pray just as you are led, without reasoning, in all simplicity. Be a little child, hanging on Him that loves you.

XCII.—TO THE SAME.

June 17, 1774.

I AM glad you think of me when you do not see me : I was almost afraid it was otherwise. Air and exercise you must have ; and if you use constant exercise, with an exact regimen, it is not improbable that you will have vigorous health, if you live to four or five and thirty. About that time the constitution both of men and women frequently takes an entire turn. At present you are certainly in your place ; and you need take no thought for the morrow.

The praying much for those we love much is doubtless the fruit of affection ; but such an affection as is well pleasing to God, and is wrought in us by his own Spirit. Therefore it is certain the intercession that flows from that affection is according to the will of God.

That is an exceedingly nice question, "How far may we desire the approbation of good men?" I think it cannot be proved that such a desire is anywhere forbidden in Scripture. But it requires a very strong influence of the Holy Spirit to prevent its running into excess.

Friendship is one species of love ; and is, in its proper sense, a disinterested reciprocal love between two persons. Wicked persons are, it seems, incapable of friendship ; for "he who fears no God can love no friend." Nor indeed is every one that fears God capable of friendship. It requires a peculiar turn of mind, without which it can have no being. The properties of Christian friendship are the same as the properties of love ; with those which St. Paul so beautifully describes in the thirteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians. And it produces, as occasions offer, every good word and work. Many have laid down the rules whereby it should be regulated ; but they are not to be comprised in a few lines. One is, "Give up every thing to your friend, except a good conscience toward God."

There have undoubtedly been instances of real friendship among Jews, yea, and among heathens who were susceptible of it: but they were by no means wicked men; they were men fearing God, and working righteousness, according to the dispensation they were under. I apprehend wicked men, under whatever dispensation, to be absolutely incapable of true friendship. By wicked men I mean either men openly profane, or men void of justice, mercy, and truth. There may be a shadow of friendship between those, whether of the same or of different sexes. But surely the substance is wanting: in all my experience I have found no exception to this rule.

XCIII.—TO THE SAME.

September 16, 1774.

I BELIEVE my displeasure at you is not likely to rise to any great height: it will hardly have time; for I should tell you very soon of any thing which I did not like.

You want more simplicity: I will give you the first instance that occurs of that simplicity which I mean. Some years since, a woman sitting by me fell into strong convulsions; and presently began to speak as in the name of God. Both her look, motions, and tone of voice, were peculiarly shocking. Yet I found my mind as ready to receive what she said, as if she had spoken with the look, motion, and accent of Cicero.

“Unprofitable; far from edifying.” Nay; but this does not go to the bottom of the matter. Why is that unprofitable to me which is edifying to others? Remember that remark in the “Thoughts on Christian Perfection:” If one grain of prejudice be in my mind, I can receive no profit from the preacher. Neither in this case can I form a right judgment of any thing a person says or does. And yet it is possible this prejudice may be innocent, as springing from the unavoidable weakness of human understanding.

Bishop Browne thought Arianism and Socinianism were

the flood which the dragon is in this age pouring out of his mouth to swallow up the woman: perhaps it may, especially with Dr. Taylor's emendation. But still the main flood in England seems to be Antinomianism. This has been a greater hinderance to the work of God than any or all others put together. But God has already lifted up his standard, and he will maintain his own cause. In the present dispensation he is undoubtedly aiming at that point, to spread holiness over the land. It is our wisdom to have this always in view, inward and outward holiness. A thousand things will be presented by men and devils to divert us from our point. These we are to watch against continually, as they will be continually changing their shape. But let your eye be single; aim still at one thing: holy, loving faith; giving God the whole heart. And incite all to this; one love; one present and eternal heaven.

XCIV.—TO THE SAME.

February 11, 1775.

THERE seems to be in our excellent friend something too near akin to apathy: "A clergyman," said one, (but I do not agree with him in this,) "ought to be all intellect; no passion." She appears to be (I will not affirm she is) at no great distance from this. It is true, by this means we might avoid much pain; but we should also lose much happiness. Therefore this is a state which I cannot desire. Rather give me the pleasure and pain too: rather let

"Plain life, with heightening passions rise,
The boast or burden of an hour."

But who has attained this? Who treads the middle path, equally remote from both extremes? I will tell you one that did, (although the remembrance of her still brings tears into my eyes,) that lovely saint, Jane Cooper! There was the due mixture of intellect and passion! I remember one of the last times I saw her, before her last illness, her

look, her attitude, her words ! My dear friend, be you a follower of her, as she was of Christ.

XCV.—TO THE SAME.

June 9, 1775.

VERY possibly, if I should live seven years longer, we should be acquainted with each other. I verily think your reserve wears off, though only by a hair's breadth at a time. Quickened your pace. What you do, do quickly. "Scarce any thing important enough to write upon !" Why, could you not say something about yourself ? And is there any thing relating to your welfare which is not important to me ? Am not I concerned in every thing which concerns you ? which either lessens or increases your happiness ? I want you to be as happy, and, in order thereto, as holy as an angel ; that you may do the will of God on earth, as angels do in heaven.

I am less careful about your increase in knowledge, any farther than it tends to love. There is a danger of your laying more stress on this than sound reason requires. Otherwise you would reap much profit from sermons which do not improve your knowledge,—which do not apply to the understanding so directly as to the heart. I feel more want of heat than light. I value light ; but it is nothing compared to love. Aim at this, my dear friend, in all public exercises ; and then you will seldom be disappointed. Then you will not stop on the threshold of perfection ; (I trust you do not now ;) but will press on to the mark, to the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus ; till you experimentally know all that love of God which passeth all (speculative) knowledge.

The lengthening of your life, and the restoring your health, are invaluable blessings. But do you ask how you shall improve them to the glory of the Giver ? And are you willing to know ? Then I will tell you how. Go and see the poor and sick in their own poor little hovels. Take up

your cross, woman ! Remember the faith ! Jesus went before you, and will go with you. Put off the gentlewoman : you bear a higher character. You are an heir of God, and joint heir with Christ ! Are you not going to meet him in the air, with ten thousand of his saints ? O be ready !

XCVI.—TO THE SAME.

February 7, 1776.

I HAVE found some of the uneducated poor who have exquisite taste and sentiment ; and many, very many, of the rich who have scarcely any at all. But I do not speak of this : I want you to converse more, abundantly more, with the poorest of the people, who, if they have not taste, have souls, which you may forward in their way to heaven. And they have (many of them) faith, and the love of God, in a larger measure than any persons I know. Creep in among these, in spite of dirt and a hundred disgusting circumstances ; and thus put off the gentlewoman. Do not confine your conversation to genteel and elegant people. I should like this as well as you do : but I cannot discover a precedent for it in the life of our Lord, or any of his apostles. My dear friend, let you and I walk as he walked.

I now understand you with regard to the P——s ; but I fear in this you are too delicate. It is certain their preaching is attended with the power of God to the hearts of many ; and why not to yours ? Is it not owing to a want of simplicity ? “Are you going to hear Mr. Wesley ?” said a friend to Mr. Blackwell. “No,” he answered : “I am going to hear God : I listen to him, whoever preaches ; otherwise I lose all my labour.”

“You will only be content to convert worlds ? You shall hew wood, or carry brick and mortar ; and when you do this in obedience to the order of Providence, it shall be more profitable to your own soul than the other.” You may remember Mr. De Renty’s other remark : “I then

saw that a well-instructed Christian is never hindered by any person or thing. For whatever prevents his doing good works gives him a fresh opportunity of submitting his will to the will of God; which at that time is more pleasing to God, and more profitable to his soul, than any thing else which he could possibly do."

Never let your expenses exceed your income. To servants I would give full as much as others give for the same service; and not more. It is impossible to lay down any general rules as to "saving all we can," and "giving all we can." In this, it seems, we must needs be directed, from time to time, by the unction of the Holy One. Evil spirits have undoubtedly abundance of work to do in an evil world; frequently in concurrence with wicked men, and frequently without them.

XCVII.—TO THE SAME.

February 26, 1776.

WHAT I advise you to is, not to contract a friendship, or even acquaintance, with poor, inelegant, uneducated persons; but frequently, nay, constantly, to visit the poor, the widow, the sick, the fatherless, in their affliction; and this, although they should have nothing to recommend them, but that they are bought with the blood of Christ. It is true, this is not pleasing to flesh and blood. There are a thousand circumstances usually attending it which shock the delicacy of our nature, or rather of our education. But yet the blessing which follows this labour of love will more than balance the cross.

"To be uneasy under obligations which we cannot repay," is certainly a fruit of diabolical generosity; and therefore Milton, with great propriety, ascribes it to the devil, and makes him speak quite in character when he says, concerning his obligations to God himself,—

"So burdensome still paying, still to owe."

I am quite of another mind : I entirely agree with you, that the more sensible we are of such obligations, the more happy we are. Surely this yoke is easy, and this burden is light !

Perhaps, if you give another reading to "Thoughts upon Dress," you will clearly see that both reason and religion are more deeply concerned than we are apt to imagine, even in the trifling article of dress ; trifling, if compared with the weightier matters of the law ; yet, in itself, of no small importance ; and that, whether you consider yourself as an individual, or as a member of a Christian society. Certainly, Dr. Young can only mean, "None is happy, unless he thinks himself so ;" and truly this is no great discovery. Is it any more than, "None is happy unless he is so ?" If he means more than this, he means wrong : for we know the best man is the happiest ; but if I thought myself the best man in the world, I should be very proud, and consequently not happy at all.

XCVIII.—TO THE SAME.

April 26, 1777.

To begin at the end : I did not preach any sermon for you in particular, though, by accident, I know what sermon you mean ; and both you and I have need of it.

I have some fine remains of Charles Perronet's, wherein he describes his own experience. It exactly agrees with yours. He too was led at first to Jesus the Mediator, and seemed, in a manner, to have no concern with the Father and the Holy Ghost. Afterward, he had communion with the Father, next with the Spirit, and then with the whole Trinity. You therefore are afraid where no fear is. Our Lord is not displeased at your following his Spirit.

I do not remember the making mention of covetousness : but it is likely I might ; for I am exceedingly afraid of it, lest it should steal unawares (as it always comes in disguise) either upon myself or my friends. I know no way

to escape it, but (having saved all we can) to give all we can. I think this is, at present, your rule as well as mine: and I trust it always will be.

We cannot impute too much to divine providence, unless we make it interfere with our free agency. I suppose that young woman, by saying she did not believe God had any thing to do with it, only meant that the passion itself was not at all from God, but altogether from evil nature: she could not mean that God does not, in a thousand instances, draw good out of evil, yea, that he may not sometimes permit us to be overtaken in a fault to preserve us from a greater.

General rules are easily laid down. But it is not possible to apply them accurately in particular cases without the anointing of the Holy One: this alone, abiding with us, can teach us of all things. Thus our general rule is, "Thou shalt do no murder;" which plainly forbids every thing that tends to impair health, and implies that we use every probable means of preserving or restoring it. But when we come to apply this to particular instances, we are presently in a labyrinth, and want that anointing which alone can make plain the way before our face, and direct us to do, in every minute circumstance, what is acceptable to God.

You have abundant reason to praise God, both for spiritual and temporal blessings: Beware of indulging gloomy thoughts: they are the bane of thankfulness. You are encompassed with ten thousand mercies: let these sink you into humble thankfulness.

XCIX.—TO THE SAME.

December 10, 1777.

You do not at all understand my manner of life. Though I am always in haste, I am never in a hurry; because I never undertake any more work than I can go through with perfect calmness of spirit. It is true, I travel four or

five thousand miles in a year. But I generally travel alone in my carriage; and, consequently, am as retired ten hours in a day, as if I was in a wilderness. On other days I never spend less than three hours (frequently ten or twelve) in the day alone. So there are few persons in the kingdom who spend so many hours secluded from all company. Yet I find time to visit the sick and the poor; and I must do it, if I believe the Bible, if I believe these are the marks whereby the Shepherd of Israel will know and judge his sheep at the great day: therefore, when there is time and opportunity for it, who can doubt but this is matter of absolute duty? When I was at Oxford, and lived almost like a hermit, I saw not how any busy man could be saved. I scarce thought it possible for a man to retain the Christian spirit amid the noise and bustle of the world. God taught me better by my own experience. I had ten times more business in America (that is, at intervals) than ever I had in my life. But it was no hinderance to silence of spirit.

Mr. Boehm was chaplain to Prince George of Denmark; secretary to him and Queen Anne; principal manager of almost all the public charities in the kingdom, and employed in numberless private charities. An intimate friend, knowing this, said to him when they were alone, "Sir, are you not hurt by that amazing hurry of business? I have seen you in your office, surrounded with people, listening to one, dictating to another, and at the same time writing to a third: could you then retain a sense of the presence of God?" He answered, "All that company, and all that business, no more hindered or lessened my communion with God, than if I had been all alone in a church kneeling before the communion table." Was it not the same case with him to whom Gregory Lopez said, "Go and be a hermit in Mexico?" I am concerned for you: I am sorry you should be content with lower degrees of usefulness and holiness than you are called to. But I cannot help it: so I submit.

C.—TO MRS. A. F.

October 12, 1764.

MY DEAR SISTER,—That great truth, “that we are saved by faith,” will never be worn out; and that sanctifying as well as justifying faith is the free gift of God. Now with God one day is as a thousand years. It plainly follows that the quantity of time is nothing to him: centuries, years, months, days, hours, and moments are exactly the same. Consequently he can as well sanctify in a day after we are justified as a hundred years. There is no difference at all, unless we suppose him to be such a one as ourselves. Accordingly we see, in fact, that some of the most unquestionable witnesses of sanctifying grace were sanctified within a few days after they were justified. I have seldom known so devoted a soul as S—— H——, at Macclesfield, who was sanctified within nine days after she was convinced of sin. She was then twelve years old, and I believe was never afterward heard to speak an improper word, or known to do an improper thing. Her look struck an awe into all that saw her. She is now in Abraham’s bosom.

Although, therefore, it usually pleases God to interpose some time between justification and sanctification, yet, as it is expressly observed in the “Farther Thoughts,” we must not fancy this to be an invariable rule. All who think this, must think we are sanctified by works, or, which comes to the same, by sufferings: for, otherwise, what is time necessary for? It must be either to do or to suffer. Whereas if nothing be required but simple faith, a moment is as good as an age.

The truth is, we are continually forming general rules from our own particular experience. Thus S—— R——, having gone about and about herself, which took up a considerable time, might very naturally suppose all who are sanctified must stay for it near as long a time as she did

Again: if God has so rooted and grounded her in love (which I neither affirm nor deny) that she cannot now fall from him, she very naturally thinks this is the case with all that are sanctified. Formerly S—— C—— drew the same inference from her own experience, and was as positive that she could not fall from that state, or sin, as S—— R—— can be now.

But “none can be sanctified without a deep knowledge of themselves and of the devices of Satan.” They may, without the latter; which God will give them in due time. And the former he can give in a moment; and frequently does, of which we have fresh instances almost every day.

In the “Thoughts on Perfection,” it is observed that, before any can be assured they are saved from sin, they must not only feel no sin, but “have a direct witness” of that salvation. And this several have had as clear as S—— R—— has, who afterward fell from that salvation; although S—— R——, to be consistent with her scheme, must deny they ever had it; yea, and must affirm that witness was either from nature or from the devil. If it was really from God, is he well pleased with this?

I know not how to reconcile speaking sharply or roughly, or even a seeming want of meekness, with perfection. And yet I am fearful of condemning whom God has not condemned. What I cannot understand I leave to him.

How is it that you make me write longer letters to you than I do almost to any one else? I know not how I find a greater concern for your welfare. I want you to be exactly right. This occasions my not thinking much of any pains that may give you help or satisfaction. The Lord touch your heart now, that all your tempers, thoughts, words, and works may be holiness unto our God!

CI.—TO LADY MAXWELL.

Newcastle-upon-Tyne, June 20, 1764.

WILL it be agreeable to my dear Lady Maxwell, that I trouble her with a letter so soon? and that I write with so little ceremony? that I use no compliment, but all plainness of speech? If it be not, you must tell me so, and I shall know better how to speak for the time to come. Indeed, it would be displeasing to me to use reserve: the regard I feel for you strongly inclines me to "think aloud," to tell you every thought which rises in my heart. I think God has taken unusual pains, so to speak, to make you a Christian; a Christian indeed, not in name, worshipping God in spirit and in truth; having in you the mind that was in Christ, and walking as Christ also walked. He has given you affliction upon affliction; he has used every possible means to unhinge your soul from things of earth, that it might fix on him alone. How far the design of his love has succeeded, I could not well judge from a short conversation. Your ladyship will therefore give me leave to inquire, Is the heaviness you frequently feel merely owing to weakness of body, and the loss of near relations? I will hope it is not. It might, indeed, at first spring from these outward pressures. But did not the gracious Spirit of God strike in, and take occasion from these to convince you of sin, of unbelief, of the want of Christ? And is not the sense of this one great cause, if not the greatest, of your present distress? If so, the greatest danger is, either that you should stifle that conviction, not suffering yourself to be convinced that you are all sin, the chief of sinners; or that you should heal the wound slightly, that you should rest before you know Christ is yours, before his Spirit witnesses with your spirit that you are a child of God. My dear lady, be not afraid to know yourself; yea, to know yourself as you are known. How soon, then, will you know your Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ

the righteous! And why not this day? Why not this hour? If you feel your want, I beseech the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ to look upon you now! O give thy servant power to believe! to see and feel how thou hast loved her! Now let her sink down into the arms of thy love; and say unto her soul, "I am thy salvation."

With regard to particular advices, I know not how far your ladyship would have me to proceed. I would not be backward to do any thing in my power; and yet I would not obtrude.

CII.—TO THE SAME.

Manchester, July 10, 1764.

MY DEAR LADY,—Till I had the pleasure of receiving yours, I was almost in doubt whether you would think it worth your while to write or not. So much the more I rejoiced when that doubt was removed, and removed in so agreeable a manner. I cannot but think of you often: I seem to see you just by me, panting after God, under the heavy pressure of bodily weakness and faintness, bereaved of your dearest relatives, convinced that you are a sinner, a debtor that has nothing to pay, and just ready to cry out:

"Jesus, now I have lost my all,
Let me upon thy bosom fall."

Amen, Lord Jesus! Speak; for thy servant heareth! Speak thyself into her heart! Lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees. Let her see thee full of grace and truth, and make her glad with the light of thy countenance.

Do not stop, my dear lady, one moment, "because you have not felt sorrow enough." Your Friend above has felt enough of it for you.

"O Lamb of God, was ever pain,
Was ever love like thine?"

Look, look unto him, and be thou saved! He is not a God afar off; he is now hovering over you with eyes of tenderness and love! Only believe! Then he turns your heaviness into joy. Do not think you are not humble enough, not contrite enough, not earnest enough. You are nothing; but Christ is all, and he is yours. The Lord God write it upon your heart, and take you for a habitation of God through the Spirit.

O that you may be ever as dead to the world as you are now! I apprehend the greatest danger from that quarter. If you should be induced to seek happiness out of Christ, how soon would your good desires vanish! Especially, if you should give way to the temptation to which your person, your youth, and your fortune will not fail to expose you. If you escape this snare, I trust you will be a real Christian, having the power as well as the form of religion. I expect you will then have likewise better health and spirits; perhaps to-morrow. But, O! take Christ to-day! I long to have you happy in him!

CHII.—TO THE SAME.

September 22, 1764.

MY DEAR LADY,—You need be under no manner of apprehension of writing too often to me. The more frequent your letters are, the more welcome they will be. When I have not heard from you for some time, I begin to be full of fears; I am afraid either that your bodily weakness increases, or that your desires after God grow cold. I consider you are at present but a tender, sickly plant, easily hurt by any rough blast. But I trust this will not be so long; for you have a strong Helper. And the Lord, whom you serve, though feebly and imperfectly, will suddenly come to his temple. When, Lord? Are all things ready now? Here is the sinner; one whose mouth is stopped; who has nothing to pay; who pleads neither her own

harmlessness, nor works, nor good desires, nor sincerity ;
but can adopt that strange word,—

“ I give up every plea beside,
Lord, I am damn'd ; but thou hast died.”

He has died ; therefore you shall live. O do not reason against him ! Let him take you now ! Let him take you just as you are, and make you what is acceptable in his sight.

It gives me pleasure, indeed, to hear that God has given you resolution to join the society. Undoubtedly you will suffer reproach on the account ; but it is the reproach of Christ. And you will have large amends when the Spirit of glory and of God shall rest upon you. Yet I foresee a danger : at first you will be inclined to think that all the members of the society are in earnest. And when you find that some are otherwise, (which will always be the case in so large a body of people,) then prejudice may easily steal in, and exceedingly weaken your soul. O beware of this rock of offence ! When you see any thing amiss, (upon hearsay you will not readily receive it,) remember our Lord's word, “ What is that to thee ? Follow thou me.” And I entreat you, do not regard the half-Methodists,—if we must use the name. Do not mind them who endeavour to hold Christ in one hand, and the world in the other. I want you to be all a Christian ; such a Christian as the Marquis de Renty or Gregory Lopez was ; such a one as that saint of God, Jane Cooper,—all sweetness, all gentleness, all love. Methinks you are just what she was when I saw her first. I shrink at the thought of seeing you what she was when I saw her last. But why should I ? What is all the pain of one that is glorifying God in the fires, with, “ Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit ?”

May I not take upon me to give you one advice more ? Be very wary how you contract new acquaintance. All, even sincere people, will not profit you. I should be

pained at your conversing frequently with any but those who are of a deeply serious spirit, and who speak closely to the point. You need not condemn them, and yet you may say, "This will not do for me."

May He that loves you richly supply all your wants, and answer your enlarged desires!

CIV.—TO THE SAME.

Londonderry, May 25, 1765.

MY DEAR LADY,—It is not easy for me to express the satisfaction I received in the few hours I lately spent with you. Before I saw you I had many fears concerning you, lest your concern for the one thing should be abated, lest your desires should be cooled, or your mind a little hurt, by any of the things which have lately occurred. So much the greater was my joy when all those fears were removed; when I found the same openness and sweetness as before, both in your spirit and conversation, and the same earnestness of desire after the only thing which deserves the whole strength of our affection. I believe tenderness and steadiness are seldom planted by nature in one spirit. But what is too hard for almighty grace? This can give strength and softness together. This is able to fill your soul with all firmness, as well as with all gentleness. And hereunto are you called; for nothing less than all the mind which was in Christ Jesus.

It was with great pleasure that I observed your fixed resolution not to rest in any thing short of this. I know not why you should; why you should be content with being half a Christian, devoted partly to God, and partly to the world, or, more properly, to the devil. Nay, but let us be all for God. He has created the whole, our whole body, soul, and spirit. He that bought us hath redeemed the whole; and let him take the purchase of his blood. Let him sanctify the whole, that all we have and are may be a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving!

I am not afraid of your being satisfied with less than this ; but I am afraid of your seeking it the wrong way. Here is the danger, that you should seek it, not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. See how exactly the apostle speaks : you do not seek it directly, but as it were by works. I fear lest this should be your case, which might retard your receiving the blessing. Christ has died for you ; he has bought pardon for you. Why should not you receive it now ? while you have this paper in your hand ? Because you have not done thus or thus ? See your own works. Because you are not thus and thus ? more contrite ? more earnest ? more sincere ? See your own righteousness. O let it all go ! None but Christ ! None but Christ ! And if he alone is sufficient ; if what he has suffered and done, if his blood and righteousness are enough, they are nigh thee ! in thy mouth, and in thy heart ! See, all things are ready ! Do not wait for this or that preparation ! for something to bring to God ! Bring Christ ! Rather, let him bring you ; bring you home to God ! Lord Jesus, take her ! Take her and all her sins ! Take her as she is ! Take her now ! Arise, why tarriest thou ? Wash away her sins ! Sprinkle her with thy blood ! Let her sink down into the arms of thy love, and cry out, " My Lord and my God ! "

CV.—TO THE SAME.

Kilkenny, July 5, 1765.

MY DEAR LADY,—As yours was sent from Dublin to Cork, and then back again hither, I did not receive it till yesterday. I am now setting my face again toward England ; but I expect to be in Dublin till the beginning of next month, and then to cross over, so as to be at Manchester (if it please God) about the middle of August. Either at Dublin, or at Manchester, I hope to have the pleasure of hearing from you. This is indeed a pleasure, as it is to write to you ; though sometimes I do this with

fear; a fear lest I should give you any pain, as I know the tenderness of your spirit. I wish I could be of some service to you; that I could encourage you to cast yourself on Him that loves you; that is now waiting to pour his peace into your heart, to give you an entrance into the holiest by his blood. See him, see him! full of grace and truth! full of grace and truth for thee! I do not doubt but he is gradually working in you; but I want you to experience, likewise, an instantaneous work. Then shall the gradual go on swiftly. Lord, speak! Thy servant heareth! Say thou, "Let there be light;" and there shall be light. Now let it spring up in your heart!

It may be, He that does all things well has wise reasons, though not apparent to us, for working more gradually in you than he has done of late years in most others. It may please him to give you the consciousness of his favour, the conviction that you are accepted through the Beloved, by almost insensible degrees, like the dawning of the day. And it is all one how it began, so you do but walk in the light. Be this given in an instant, or by degrees, hold it fast. Christ is yours; he hath loved you; he hath given himself for you. Therefore you shall be holy as he is holy, both in heart and in all manner of conversation.

Give me leave, my dear friend, to add a word, likewise, concerning your bodily health. You should in anywise give yourself all the air and exercise that you can. And I should advise you (even though long custom made it difficult, if that were the case) to sleep as early as possible; never later than ten, in order to rise as early as health will permit. The having good spirits, so called, or the contrary, very much depends on this. I believe medicines will do you little service: you need only proper diet, exact regularity, and constant exercise, with the blessing of God.

Your speaking or writing was never tedious to me yet; and I am persuaded never will be.

CVI.—TO THE SAME.

London, December 1, 1765.

MY DEAR LADY,—Perhaps there is scarce any child of man that is not, at some time, a little touched by prejudice, so far, at least, as to be troubled, though not wounded. But it does not hurt, unless it fixes upon the mind. It is not strength of understanding which can prevent this. The heart, which otherwise suffers most by it, makes the resistance which only is effectual. I cannot easily be prejudiced against any person whom I tenderly love, till that love declines. So long, therefore, as our affection is preserved by watchfulness and prayer to Him that gave it, prejudice must stand at a distance. Another excellent defence against it is openness. I admire you upon this account. You dare (in spite of that strange reserve which prevails in North Britain) speak the naked sentiments of your heart. I hope my dear friend will never do otherwise. In simplicity and godly sincerity, the very reverse of worldly wisdom, have all your conversation in the world.

Have you received a gleam of light from above, a spark of faith? O let it not go! hold fast, by his grace, that token of his love, that earnest of your inheritance. Come just as you are, and come boldly, to the throne of grace. You need not delay! Even now the bowels of Jesus Christ yearn over you. What have you to do with to-morrow? I love you to-day. And how much more does he love you! He

“Pities still his wand’ring sheep,
Longs to bring you to his fold!”

To-day hear his voice; the voice of Him that speaks as never man spake; the voice that raises the dead, that calls the things which are not as though they were. Hark! what says he now? “Fear not, only believe! Woman, thy sins are forgiven thee! Go in peace; thy faith hath made thee whole.”

CVII.—TO THE SAME.

Newcastle-upon-Tyne, May 6, 1766.

MY DEAR LADY,—It was well that I did not hear any thing of a trial you lately had till it was past. You have great reason to bless God that this did not turn you out of the way. You might very easily have inferred from it that “all these people are alike;” and thence have given way to a thousand reasonings, which would have brought you into utter darkness. But it is plain you are not left to your own weakness. You have a strong Helper. The Lord stands on your right hand; therefore you are not moved. And I make no doubt but he will continue to help till his arm brings you salvation. But, in the meantime, you have need of patience; and the more so, because you have a weak body. This, one may expect, will frequently press down the soul; especially till you are strong in faith. But how soon may that be, seeing it is the gift, yea, and the free gift, of God! Therefore it is never far off. The word is nigh thee! “Only believe!” Look unto Jesus! Be thou saved! Receive out of his fulness grace upon grace; mercy, and grace to keep mercy.

On the 24th instant I hope to be at Edinburgh with my wife and daughter. But perhaps you will see the salvation of God before you see,

My dear lady,

Your ever affectionate servant,

CVIII.—TO THE SAME.

Norwich, February 23, 1767.

MY DEAR LADY,—For a considerable time I was under apprehensions that you were in a state of temptation. And as I had no other way of helping you, this put me upon commending you the more frequently to Him that is able to save you. Your last, therefore, was doubly acceptable

to me, as it relieved me from my fears concerning you, and gave me the occasion of rejoicing over one for whom I have the most sincere and tender affection. Sure it is, that the grace of God is sufficient for you in this and in every trying hour. So you have happily experienced it to be already; and so I trust you will experience to the end. But you must not imagine that you are yet out of the reach of temptation: thoughts will be suggested again and again, so that you have still need to be

“For ever standing on your guard,
And watching unto prayer.”

And let my dear friend keep at the utmost distance from temptation, and carefully shun all occasions of evil. O it is a good though painful fight! You find you are not sent a warfare at your own cost. You have Him with you who can have compassion on your infirmities; who remembers you are but dust; and who, at the same time, has all power in heaven and earth, and so is able to save you to the uttermost. Exercise, especially as the spring comes on, will be of greater service to your health than a hundred medicines; and I know not whether it will not be restored in a larger measure than for many years when the peace of God fixes in your heart. Is it far off? Do not think so. His ear is not heavy; he now hears the cry of your heart. And will he not answer? Why not to-day? Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly! Your openness obliges me to be more than ever,

My dear lady,
Your affectionate friend and servant,

CIX.—TO THE SAME.

Cork, June 4, 1767.

MY DEAR LADY,—My belief is, that a journey to England might be of great service to your health. And it is not improbable you might receive much benefit from the

water of the Hot Wells, near Bristol. In August I hope to be at Bristol; and again in the latter end of September. My chaise and horses are at Bristol, which you would oblige me much if you would please to use as your own, (if you do not bring any with you,) during your stay there; for you should, if possible, ride out daily. My wife, who is at Newcastle, will be exceeding glad to wait upon you there. And if you choose to rest a few days, I should be happy if you would make use of the Orphan House. You would be pleased with the Miss Dales, and they with you: you and they have drunk into one spirit. Miss Peggy is one of the holiest young women that I have any knowledge of: indeed I think both the sisters have no desire, but to glorify God with their body and with their spirit. You will be so kind as to let me know when you expect to be at Newcastle; and possibly I may meet you there. As you were providentially called to the place where you now are, I cannot doubt but you will be preserved. But you have need of much prayer and continual watching, or you may insensibly lose what God has given. I am jealous over you: I cannot but be interested in whatever concerns you. I know your tender spirit; your desire to please all for their good; your unwillingness to give pain. And even these amiable dispositions may prove a snare; for how easily may they be carried too far! If you find any thing hurts you, or draws your soul from God, I conjure you, flee for your life! In that case you must not stand upon ceremony; you must escape without delay. But I hope better things: I hope you are sent to Brisbane, not to receive hurt, but to do good; to grow in grace, to find a deeper communion than ever with Him that gave himself for you.

CX.—TO THE SAME.

London, March 3, 1769.

MY DEAR LADY,—To be incapable of sympathizing with the distressed is not a desirable state. Nor would one wish to extirpate either sorrow or any other of our natural passions. And yet it is both possible and highly desirable to attain the same experience with the Marquis de Renty, who, on occasion of his lady's illness, told those who inquired how he could bear it, "I cannot say but my nature is deeply affected with the apprehension of so great a loss. And yet I feel such a full acquiescence in the will of God, that, were it proper, I could dance and sing."

I have heard my mother say, "I have frequently been as fully assured that my father's spirit was with me as if I had seen him with my eyes." But she did not explain herself any farther. I have myself many times found on a sudden so lively an apprehension of a deceased friend, that I have sometimes turned about to look; at the same time I have felt an uncommon affection for them. But I never had any thing of this kind with regard to any but those that died in faith. In dreams I have had exceedingly lively conversations with them; and I doubt not but they were then very near.

It gives me pleasure to hear that you did not neglect our own preaching, in order to attend any other. The hearing Mr. F—— at other times I do not know that any could blame; unless you found it unsettled your mind, or weakened your expectation of an entire deliverance from sin. And this, I apprehend, it did not.

You never "take up too much of my time." To converse with you, even in this imperfect way, is both agreeable and useful to me. I love your spirit, and it does me good. I trust God will still give you that hunger and thirst after righteousness till you are satisfied therewith. And who knows how soon?

CXI.—TO THE SAME.

Londonderry, April 29, 1769.

MY DEAR LADY,—Awhile ago I was concerned at hearing from Edinburgh that you were unwell; although I could not doubt but it was ordered well by an unerring Providence, as a means of keeping you dead to all below, and of quickening your affections to things above. And indeed, this is the rule whereby the inhabitants of a better world judge of good and evil. Whatever raises the mind to God is good; and in the same proportion as it does this. Whatever draws the heart from its centre is evil; and more or less so, as it has more or less of this effect. You have accordingly found pain, sickness, bodily weakness, to be real goods; as bringing you nearer and nearer to the fountain of all happiness and holiness. And yet, it is certain, nature shrinks from pain, and that without any blame. Only in the same moment that we say, “If it be possible, let this cup pass from me,” the heart should add, like our great Pattern, “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.” Lady Baird I did not see before I left London; and Lady K—— B—— I did not understand. She was exceedingly civil, and I think affectionate, but perfectly shut up; so that I knew no more of her state of mind than if I had never seen her.

CXII.—TO THE SAME.

London, February 17, 1770.

MY DEAR LADY,—To us it may seem that uninterrupted health would be a greater help to us than pain or sickness. But herein we certainly are mistaken: we are not such good judges in our own cause. You may truly say, “Health I shall have, if health be best.” But in this and all things, you may trust Him that loves you. Indeed, nervous disorders are, of all others, as one observes, ene

mies to the joy of faith. But the essence of it, that confidence in a loving, pardoning God, they can neither destroy nor impair. Nay, as they keep you dead to all below, they may forward you therein; and they may increase your earnestness after that pure love which turns earth into paradise.

It will be by much pains and patience that you will keep one in high life steadfast in the plain old way. I should wish you to converse with her as frequently as possible. 'Then, I trust, God will use you to keep alive the fire which he has kindled. I am in great hopes that chapel will be of use; but it will not be easy to procure a converted clergyman. A schoolmaster will be more easily found; although many here are frightened at the name of Scotland. A diligent master may manage twenty, or perhaps thirty children. If one whom I lately saw is willing to come, I believe he will answer your design.

I have some thoughts of going to America; but the way is not yet plain. I wait till Providence shall speak more clearly, on one side or the other. In April I hope to reach Inverness, and to take Edinburgh in my way back to England. But let us live to-day! What a blessing may you receive now!

“Now let your heart with love o'erflow,
And all your life his glory show.”

CXIII.—TO THE SAME.

London, January 24, 1771.

MY DEAR LADY—Although Mr. M'Nab* is quite clear as to justification by faith, and is in general a sound and good preacher, yet I fear he is not clear of blame in this. He is too warm and impatient of contradiction; otherwise he must be lost to all common sense to preach against final perseverance in Scotland. From the first hour that I

* The preacher then stationed in the Edinburgh circuit.—Ed.

entered the kingdom, it was a sacred rule with me, never to preach on any controverted point,—at least not in a controversial way. Any one may see that this is only to put a sword into our enemies' hands. It is the direct way to increase all their prejudices, and to make all our labours fruitless. You will shortly have a trial of another kind. Mr. De Courcy purposes to set out for Edinburgh in a few days. He was from a child a member of one of our societies in the south of Ireland. There he received remission of sins, and was for some time groaning for full redemption. But when he came to Dublin, the Philistines were upon him, and soon prevailed over him. Quickly he was convinced that "there is no perfection;" and that "all things depend on absolute, unchangeable decrees." At first he was exceedingly warm upon these heads: now he is far more calm. His natural temper, I think, is good: he is open, friendly, and generous. He has also a good understanding, and is not unacquainted with learning, though not deeply versed therein. He has no disagreeable person, a pleasing address, and is as lively as well as a sensible preacher. Now when you add to this, that he is quite new, and very young, you may judge how he will be admired and caressed! "Surely such a preacher as this never was in Edinburgh before! Mr. Whitefield himself was not to compare with him! What an angel of a man!" Now how will a raw, inexperienced youth be able to encounter this? If there be not the greatest of miracles to preserve him, will it not turn his brain? And may he not then do far more hurt than either Mr. W—— or Mr. T—— did? Will he not prevent your friend from "going on to perfection," or thinking of any such thing? Nay, may he not shake you also? He would; but that the God whom you serve is able to deliver you. At present, indeed, he is in an exceedingly loving spirit. But will that continue long? There will be danger on the one hand, if it does; there will be danger on the other, if it does not. It does not appear that any great change has been wrought in our neighbours by

Mr. Wh——'s death. He had fixed the prejudice so deep that even he himself was not able to remove it; yet our congregations have increased exceedingly, and the work of God increases on every side. I am glad you use more exercise. It is good for both body and soul. As soon as Mr. De Courcy is come, I shall be glad to hear how the prospect opens. You will then need a larger share of the wisdom from above.

CXIV.—TO THE SAME.

February 26, 1771.

MY DEAR LADY,—I cannot but think the chief reason of the little good done by our preachers at Edinburgh is the opposition which has been made by the ministers of Edinburgh, as well as by the false brethren from England. These steeled the hearts of the people against all the good impressions which might otherwise have been made, so that the same preachers by whom God has constantly wrought, not only in various parts of England, but likewise in the northern parts of Scotland, were in Edinburgh only not useless. They felt a damp upon their own spirits; they had not their usual liberty of speech, and the word they spoke seemed to rebound upon them, and not to sink into the hearts of the hearers. At my first coming I usually find something of this myself; but the second or third time of preaching, it is gone; and I feel, greater is He that is with us than all the powers of earth and hell.

If any one could show you, by plain Scripture and reason, a more excellent way than that you have received, you certainly would do well to receive it; and, I trust, I should do the same. But I think it will not be easy for any one to show us, either that Christ did not die for all, or that he is not willing as well as able to cleanse from all sin, even in the present world. If your steady adherence to these great truths be termed bigotry, yet you have no need to be ashamed. You are reproached for Christ's

sake, and the Spirit of glory and of Christ shall rest upon you. Perhaps our Lord may use you to soften some of the harsh spirits, and to preserve Lady G——, or Mr. De Courcy, from being hurt by them. I hope to hear from you (on whom I can depend) a frequent account of what is done near you. After you have suffered awhile, may God stablish, strengthen, settle you!

CXV.—TO THE SAME.

London, February 8, 1772.

MY DEAR LADY,—I commend you for meddling with points of controversy as little as possible. It is abundantly easier to lose our love in that rough field than to find truth. This consideration has made me exceedingly thankful to God for giving me a respite from polemical labours. I am glad he has given to others both the power and the will to answer them that trouble me; so that I may not always be forced to hold my weapons in one hand while I am building with the other. I rejoice, likewise, not only in the abilities, but in the temper, of Mr. Fletcher. He writes as he lives: I cannot say that I know such another clergyman in England or Ireland. He is all fire: but it is the fire of love. His writings, like his constant conversation, breathe nothing else, to those who read him with an impartial eye. And although Mr. Shirley scruples not to charge him with using subtlety and metaphysical distinctions, yet he abundantly clears himself of this charge, in the "Second Check to Antinomianism." Such the last letters are styled, and with great propriety, for such they have really been. They have given a considerable check to those who were everywhere making void the law through faith; setting "the righteousness of Christ" in opposition to the law of Christ, and teaching that "without holiness any man may see the Lord."

Notwithstanding both outward and inward trials, I trust

you are still on the borders of perfect love. For the Lord is nigh!

“See the Lord thy Keeper stand
Omnipotently near!
Lo! he holds thee by thy hand,
And banishes thy fear!”

You have no need of fear. Hope unto the end! Are not all things possible to him that believeth? Dare to believe! Seize a blessing now! The Lord increase your faith!

CXVI.—TO THE SAME.

Newcastle, May 3, 1777.

MY DEAR LADY,—The new chapel which we are now building in London requires much of my attendance there, so that I cannot conveniently be absent more than two Sundays together. Accordingly, when I set out, I fixed Saturday, the 19th instant, for my return; and ordered notice to be given of my design to meet the classes the week following. I cannot therefore have the pleasure of seeing you now; which, if it could be, I should greatly desire. I love your spirit; I love your conversation; I love your correspondence; I have often received both profit and pleasure thereby. I frequently find a want of more light: but I want heat more than light. And you have frequently been an instrument of conveying this to my soul; of animating me to run the glorious race. I trust you find no decay in your own soul, but a still increasing vigour. Some time since, you enjoyed a measure of that great salvation, deliverance from inbred sin. Do you hold fast whereunto you had attained, and still press forward, to be filled with all the fulness of God? There is the prize before you! Look up, believe, and take all you want!

CXVII.—TO THE SAME.

Dublin, July 4, 1787.

MY DEAR LADY,—Our correspondence, I hope, will never be broken off till one of us be removed into a better world. It is true, I have often wondered that you were not weary of so useless a correspondent: for I am very sensible the writing of letters is my brother's talent, rather than mine. Yet I really love to write to you, as I love to think of you. And sometimes it may please Him who sends by whom he will send, to give you some assistance by me. And your letters have frequently been an encouragement and a comfort to me. Let them never, my dear friend, be intermitted, during the few days I have to stay below. After Miss Roe first, and then Miss Ritchie, had given me so particular an account of that branch of their experience, I examined, one by one, the members of the select society in London on that head. But I found very few, not above nine or ten, who had any conception of it. I think there are three or four in Dublin who likewise speak clearly and Scripturally of having had such a manifestation of the several persons in the ever blessed Trinity. Formerly I thought this was the experience of all those that were perfected in love; but I am now clearly convinced that it is not. Only a few of these are favoured with it. It was, indeed, a wonderful instance of divine mercy that, at a time when you were so encumbered with the affairs of this world, you should have so much larger a taste of the powers of the world to come. It reminds me of brother Laurence's words: "When I was charged with the affairs of the convent at Burgundy, I did not understand them; and yet, I know not how, all was well done!" I doubt not you will find the very same experience in every thing which God calls you to: his word will be more and more eminently fulfilled, "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he will direct thy paths."

CXVIII.—TO THE SAME.

London, August 8, 1788.

MY DEAR LADY,—It is certain, many persons, both in Scotland and England, would be well pleased to have the same preachers always. But we cannot forsake the plan of acting which we have followed from the beginning. For fifty years God has been pleased to bless the itinerant plan; the last year most of all: it must not be altered till I am removed; and I hope will remain till our Lord comes to reign upon earth.

I do not know (unless it unfits us for the duties of life) that we can have too great a sensibility of human pain. Methinks I should be afraid of losing any degree of this sensibility. I had a son-in-law (now in Abraham's bosom) who quitted his profession, that of a surgeon, for that very reason; because he said it made him less sensible of human pain. And I have known exceeding few persons who have carried this tenderness of spirit to excess. I recollect but one who was constrained to leave off, in a great measure, visiting the sick, because he could not see any one in pain without fainting away. Mr. Charles Perronet was the first person I was acquainted with who was favoured with the same experience as the Marquis de Renty, with regard to the ever blessed Trinity; Miss Ritchie was the second; Miss Roe (now Mrs. Rogers) the third. I have as yet found but a few instances; so that this is not, as I was at first apt to suppose, the common privilege of all that are "perfect in love."

Pardon me, my dear friend, for my heart is tenderly concerned for you, if I mention one fear I have concerning you, lest, on conversing with some, you should be in any degree warped from Christian simplicity. O do not wish to hide that you are a Methodist! Surely it is best to appear just what you are. I believe you will receive this as a proof of the sincerity with which I am,

Your ever affectionate servant.

CXIX.—TO LADY M—.

London, August 17, 1764.

MY DEAR LADY,—Since I had the pleasure of yours, I have hardly had an hour that I could call my own; otherwise I should not have delayed writing so long, as I have a very tender regard for you, and an earnest desire that you should be altogether a Christian. I cannot be content with your being ever so harmless or regular in your behaviour, or even exemplary in all externals: nay, more than all this you have received already, for you have the fear of God. But shall you stop here? God forbid. This is only the beginning of wisdom. You are not to end here: fear shall ripen into love. You shall know (perhaps very soon) that love of God which passeth knowledge. You shall witness the kingdom of God within you; even righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

It is no small instance of the goodness of God toward you, that you are conscious of your want; your want of living faith. And his goodness herein is more remarkable, because almost all your neighbours would set you down for a right good believer. O beware of those flatterers! Hold fast the conviction which God hath given you! Faith, living, conquering, loving faith, is undoubtedly the thing you want. And of this you have frequently a taste to encourage you in pressing forward: such is the tender mercy of Him that loves you; such his desire that you should receive all his precious promises! Do not think they are afar off. Do not imagine you must stay long (years or months) before you receive them. Do not put them off a day, an hour! Why not now? Why should you not look up this instant, and see, as it were, Jesus Christ set forth, evidently set forth, crucified before your eyes? O hear his voice! “Daughter, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven thee!” “Say not in thy heart, Who shall go up into heaven, or who shall go down into the deep?” No; “The

word is "nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart."
"Lord, I believe; help my unbelief."

Joy in the Holy Ghost is a precious gift of God, but yet tenderness of conscience is still greater; and all this is for you. Just ready,—

"The speechless awe which dares not move,
And all the silent heaven of love."

I am no great friend to solitary Christianity; nevertheless, in so peculiar a case as yours, I think an exception may be admitted. It does seem most expedient for you to retire out of the city, at least for a season, till God has increased your strength: for the company of those who know not God, who are strangers to the religion of the heart, especially if they are sensible, agreeable people, might quite damp the grace of God in your soul.

You cannot oblige me more than by fully opening your mind to me: there is no danger of your tiring me. I do not often write such long letters; but when I write to you I am full of matter. I seem to see you just before me, a poor, feeble, helpless creature, but just upon the point of salvation; upright of heart, (in a measure,) full of real desires for God, and emerging into light. The Lord take you wholly!

CXX.—TO MISS PYWELL.

Kilkenny, April 23, 1771.

MY DEAR SISTER,—I hardly knew whether you were dead or alive, having not heard from you for so long a season. Yesterday I received yours of March 28th, and am glad to hear you are not moved from your steadfastness. Certainly it is not the will of our Lord that you should: his gifts are without repentance. Do you find no decay in faith? Do you as clearly as ever see Him who is invisible? Is your hope as lively as at first? Do you still taste of the

powers of the world to come? And can you say, in as strong a sense as ever,—

“I nothing want beneath, above,
Happy in a Saviour's love?”

Do you feel no anger at any time? no pride? no will but what is subordinate to the will of God? And have you the witness in yourself that all your ways please him? Then expect to see greater things than these; for there is no end of his goodness.

CXXI.—TO THE SAME.

London, January 22, 1772.

MY DEAR SISTER,—You have given me clear and satisfactory answers to the questions which I proposed, and I rejoice over you for the grace of God which is in you. May he increase it more and more! How should I rejoice to see you, and to talk with you more particularly on these subjects! I hope that may be in the spring; but before then you can tell me whether you are always sensible of the presence of God? Is that sense never interrupted by company, or by hurry of business? Is your heart lifted up to God, whatever your hands are employed in? Do you rejoice evermore? Are you always happy? always more or less enjoying God? Do you never fret; never so grieve at any thing as to interrupt your happiness? Do you never find lowness of spirits? Are you enabled in every thing to give thanks?

CXXII.—TO THE SAME.

London, December 29, 1774.

MY DEAR SISTER,—I am glad you parted from our honest friend C—ne upon so good terms. All the trials you suffered while you were there are now passed away like a dream. So are all the afflictions we endured yes-

terday; but they are noted in God's book, and the happy fruit of them may remain when heaven and earth are passed away. Trials you are likewise to expect where you are now; for you are still in the body, and wrestle, if not with flesh and blood, yet with "principalities, and powers, with the rulers of the darkness of this world, with wicked spirits in high places;" and it is good for you that every grain of your faith should be tried: afterward you shall come forth as gold. See that you never be weary or faint in your mind; account all these things for your profit, that you may be a full partaker of His holiness, and

"Brighter in all his image shine."

CXXIII.—TO THE REV. MR. F——.

St. Ives, September 15, 1762.

DEAR SIR,—

"Spectatum satis, ac donatum jam rude quæris,
Mecænas, iterum antiquo me includere ludo?
Non cadem est ætas, non mens."*

I have entirely lost my taste for controversy. I have lost my readiness in disputing; and I take this to be a providential discharge from it. All I can now do with a clear conscience is, not to enter into a formal controversy about the new birth, or justification by faith, any more than Christian perfection, but simply to declare my judgment, and to explain myself as clearly as I can, upon any difficulty that may arise concerning it.

So far I can go with you, but no farther. I still say, and without any self-contradiction, I know no persons living who are so deeply conscious of their needing Christ, both as prophet, priest, and king, as those who believe

* This quotation from Horace is thus translated by Francis:—

"Wherefore, Mecænas, would you thus engage
Your bard, dismiss'd with honour from the stage,
Again to venture in the lists of fame,
His youth, his genius, now no more the same?"—ED.

themselves, and whom I believe, to be cleansed from all sin; I mean, from all pride, anger, evil desire, idolatry, and unbelief. These very persons feel more than ever their own ignorance, littleness of grace, coming short of the full mind that was in Christ, and walking less accurately than they might have done after their divine Pattern; are more convinced of the insufficiency of all they are, have, or do, to bear the eye of God without a mediator; are more penetrated with the sense of the want of him than ever they were before.

If Mr. M—— or you say that “coming short is sin,” be it so; I contend not. But still I say, “These are they whom I believe to be Scripturally perfect. And yet these never felt their want of Christ so deeply and strongly as they do now.” If in saying this I have “fully given up the point,” what would you have more? Is it not enough that I leave you to “boast your superior power against the little, weak shifts of baffled error?” “Canst not thou be content,” as the Quaker said, “to lay J. W. on his back, but thou must tread his guts out?”

Here are persons exceeding holy and happy; rejoicing evermore, praying always, and in every thing giving thanks; feeling the love of God and man every moment; feeling no pride, or other evil temper. If these are not perfect, that Scriptural word has no meaning. Stop! you must not cavil at that word; you are not wiser than the Holy Ghost. But if you are not, see that you teach perfection too. “But are they not sinners?” Explain the term one way, and I say, Yes; another, and I say, No. “Are they cleansed from all sin?” I believe they are; meaning from all sinful tempers. “But have they then need of Christ?” I believe they have, in the sense and for the reasons above mentioned. Now be this true or false, it is no contradiction: it is consistent with itself; and, I think, consistent with right reason, and the whole oracles of God.

O let you and I go on to perfection! God grant we may so run as to attain!

CXXIV.—TO THE REV. MR. —.

1775.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,—I have obligations to you, on many accounts, from the time I first saw you ; particularly for the kind concern you showed me when I was ill at Tanderagee. These have increased upon me every time that I have since had the pleasure of waiting upon you. Permit me, sir, to speak without reserve. Esteem was added to my affectionate regard when I saw the uncommon pains you took with the flock committed to your care ; as also when I observed the remarkably serious manner wherein you read prayers in your family. Many years have passed since that time ; many more than I am likely to see under the sun. But before I go hence I would fain give you one instance of my sincere regard ; the rather, because I can scarce expect to see you again till we meet in a better world. But it is difficult for me to do it, as I feel myself inferior to you in so many respects. Yet permit me to ask a strange question : Is your soul as much alive to God as it was once ? Have you not suffered loss from your relations or acquaintance, that are sensible and agreeable men, but not encumbered with religion ? Some of them, perhaps, as free from the very form as from the power of it. O sir, if you lose any of the things which you have wrought, who can make you amends for that loss ? If you do not receive a full reward, what equivalent can you gain ? I was pained, even at your hospitable table, in the midst of those I loved so well. We did not begin and close the meal in the same manner you did ten years ago ! You was then, contrary to almost universal custom, unfashionably serious in asking a blessing and returning thanks. I know many would blame you for it : but surely the Lord said, “ Servant of God, well done ! ” Wishing you and your lovely family every blessing,

I am, reverend and dear sir,

Your obliged and affectionate brother and servant.

CXXV.—TO LADY —.

London, June 19, 1771.

MY DEAR LADY,—Many years since I saw that “without holiness no man shall see the Lord.” I began following after it, and inciting all with whom I had any intercourse to do the same. Ten years after, God gave me a clearer view than I had before of the way how to attain this; namely, by faith in the Son of God. And immediately I declared to all, “We are saved from sin, we are made holy, by faith.” This I testified in private, in public, in print; and God confirmed it by a thousand witnesses. I have continued to declare this for above thirty years; and God hath continued to confirm the word of his grace. But during this time well nigh all the religious world hath set themselves in array against me, and, among the rest, many of my own children, following the example of one of my eldest sons, Mr. W——. Their general cry has been, “He is unsound in the faith; he preaches another gospel!” I answer, Whether it be the same which they preach or not, it is the same which I have preached for above thirty years. This may easily appear from what I have published during that whole term. I instance only in three sermons: that on salvation by faith, printed in the year 1738; that on the Lord our righteousness, printed a few years since; and that on Mr. Whitefield’s funeral, printed only some months ago. But it is said, “O but you printed ten lines in August last, which contradict all your other writings!” Be not so sure of this. It is probable, at least, that I understand my own meaning as well as you do; and that meaning I have yet again declared in the sermon last referred to. By that interpret those ten lines, and you will understand them better: although I should think that any one might see, even without this help, that the lines in question do not refer to the condition of obtaining, but of continuing in, the favour of God. But whether the sentiment contained in those lines be right or wrong, and

whether it be well or ill expressed, the gospel which I now preach God does still confirm by new witnesses in every place ; perhaps never so much in this kingdom as within these last three months. Now I argue from glaring, undeniable fact ; God cannot bear witness to a lie. The gospel, therefore, which he confirms must be true in substance. There may be opinions maintained at the same time which are not exactly true ; and who can be secure from these ? Perhaps I thought myself so once : when I was much younger than I am now, I thought myself almost infallible ; but, I bless God, I know myself better now.

To be short : such as I am, I love you well. You have one of the first places in my esteem and affection ; and you once had some regard for me. But it cannot continue, if it depends upon my seeing with your eyes, or on my being in no mistake. What if I was in as many as Mr. Law himself ? If you were, I should love you still, provided your heart was still right with God. My dear friend, you seem not to have well learned yet the meaning of those words which I desire to have continually written upon my heart, " Whosoever doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

CXXVI.—TO MISS JANE HILTON, AFTERWARD
MRS. BARTON, OF BEVERLEY.

York, June 25, 1768.

MY DEAR SISTER,—Your conversation gave me much satisfaction. I rejoiced to find that you were sensible of your loss, and determined, by the grace of God, never to rest till you had recovered all which you once enjoyed. Nay, and you will recover it with increase ; you will find a deeper communion with God, and a more full self-devotion than ever. An earnest of this was given you the other day. Hold *that* fast, and continually expect the rest. How did you find yourself on Thursday morning ? Had you not again a taste of the great salvation ? And how have you

been since? Are you still happy in God; and resolved not to rest till you are all devoted to him? See that you do not fall again into evil reasonings! Be simple before God. Continue instant in prayer; and watch against whatever you know, by experience, to be a weight upon your mind. How soon may you then have your whole desire! How soon may your heart be all love! Why not now? All things are ready: only believe!

CXXVII.—TO THE SAME.

Guiselley, July 1, 1768.

MY DEAR SISTER,—You must now expect temptations. Perhaps they will assault you on every side; for all the powers of hell are enraged at you, and will use every art to move you from your steadfastness. But He that is for you is greater than all that are against you: only beware of evil reasoning! Hang simply on Him that loves you, and whom you love; just as a little helpless child. Christ is yours, all yours: that is enough. Lean your whole soul upon him! Do you find a witness in yourself that he has cleansed your heart? Do you feel this always? And have you a constant sense of the loving presence of God? You never need lose any thing that God has given, so you keep close to him. Be little and mean in your own eyes, glorying only in the Lord. And do not cease to pray for

Your affectionate brother.

It is a pity but you should now read the "Plain Account of Christian Perfection," (I suppose you may get it at Hull,) and the First Epistle of St. John.

CXXVIII.—TO THE SAME.

Bristol, August 20, 1768.

MY DEAR SISTER,—I write often, because I know you are yet weak and tender, and in need of every help. I am not sorry that you have trials: they are intended to

show you your own helplessness; and to give you a fuller confidence in Him who has all power in heaven and earth. You have reason to cast all your care upon him; for he has dealt bountifully with you. When any trial comes, see that you do not look to the thing itself; but immediately look unto Jesus. Reason not upon it, but believe. See the hand of God in Shimei's tongue. If you want advice in any point, write to me without delay. And, meantime, stay your whole soul upon Him who will never leave you nor forsake you. Tell him simply all you fear, all you feel, all you want. Pour out your soul into his bosom. Do you feel no pride, no anger, no desire? You will feel temptations to all: and the old deceiver will tell you again and again, "That is pride; that is anger!" But regard him not. And cast not away your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.

CXXIX.—TO THE SAME.

Bristol, October 8, 1768.

MY DEAR SISTER,—You need never be afraid of "wearying my patience," unless it be by your silence. There is no danger of your writing too often: I can easily believe the description you give is just: therefore there are only two particulars remaining,—First, Have you both the consent of your parents? Without this there is seldom a blessing. Secondly, Is he able to keep you? I mean, in such a manner as you have lived hitherto. Otherwise remember, "When poverty comes in at the door, love flies out at the window."

Do you find as much as ever of the spirit of prayer and of continual watchfulness? Are you always sensible of the presence of God? in the greatest hurry of business? Have you power over wandering thoughts?

CXXX.—TO THE SAME.

Lisburn, April 9, 1769.

MY DEAR SISTER,—I thank brother Barton for his letter. Both of you have now more need than ever continually to watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation. There will be a great danger of so cleaving to each other as to forget God; or of being so taken up with a creature as to abate your hunger and thirst after righteousness. There will be a danger likewise of whiling away time; of not improving it to the uttermost; of spending more of it than needs in good sort of *talk* with each other, which yet does not quicken your souls. If you should once get into a habit of this, it will be exceedingly hard to break it off. Therefore you should now attend to every step you take, that you may begin as you hope to hold on to the end. And beware you are not entangled with worldly care, any more than worldly desire. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing make your request known to God, with thanksgiving.

~~CXXXI.—TO THE SAME.~~*Twkesbury, March 15, 1770.*

MY DEAR SISTER,—I rejoice to hear that you stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free; and the more, because, although many taste of that heavenly gift, deliverance from inbred sin, yet so few, so exceeding few, retain it one year; hardly one in ten; nay, one in thirty. Many hundreds in London were made partakers of it within sixteen or eighteen months: but I doubt whether twenty of them are now as holy and as happy as they were. And hence others had doubted whether God *intended that salvation* to be enjoyed long. That many *have* it for a season, that they allow; but are not satisfied that any *retain* it always. Shall not you, for one? You

will, if you watch and pray, and continue hanging upon him. Then you will always give matter of rejoicing to
Your affectionate brother.

CXXXII.—TO THE SAME.

May 8, 1770.

MY DEAR SISTER,—Two things are certain: the one, that it is possible to lose even the pure love of God; the other, that it is not necessary, it is not unavoidable; it may be lost, but it may be kept. Accordingly we have some in every part of the kingdom who have never been moved from their steadfastness. And from this moment you need never be moved: his grace is sufficient for you. But you must continue to grow, if you continue to stand; for no one can stand still. And is it not your Lord's will concerning you, that you should daily receive a fresh increase of love? And see that you labour so much the more to comfort the feeble-minded, to support the weak, to confirm the wavering, and recover them that are out of the way. In June I hope to see you. Peace be with your spirits!

CXXXIII.—TO THE SAME.

Norwich, November 5, 1770.

MY DEAR SISTER,—For many years I had a kind of scruple with regard to praying for temporal things. But three or four years ago I was thoroughly persuaded that scruple was unnecessary. Being then straitened much, I made it matter of prayer; and I had an immediate answer. It is true, we can only ask outward blessings with reserve: "If this is best; if it be thy will:" and in this manner we may certainly plead the promise, "All these things shall be added unto you."

I hope the little debates which were some time since in the society at Beverley are at an end; and that you all now continue in love, and bear one another's burdens.

You had, for a long time, a hard part to act between the contending parties ; but as God preserved you from anger and from a party spirit, you suffered no loss thereby. Beware of suffering loss from another quarter,—from worldly care. This is a dangerous enemy. You had need steadily to cast your care on Him that careth for you. To him I commit you and yours ; and am

Your affectionate brother.

CXXXIV.—TO THE SAME.

January 21, 1773.

MY DEAR SISTER,—Consult with some experienced and sensible person upon every step you take. Concerning removing to Hull, you would do well to consult Thomas Snowdon, or some one that lives there. It would be expedient, too, to take good advice before you enter upon any new business. Every thing now is full of uncertainty and danger, during the amazing dearness of provisions. Hence most people have just money to buy food, and have nothing more to lay out. Yet the promise stands sure : “ Seek the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and *these things* shall be added unto you.” Yea, surely, the Lord will sooner make windows in heaven than suffer his truth to fail. Peace be with your spirits !

CXXXV.—TO THE SAME

Bristol, October 8, 1774.

MY DEAR SISTER,—It is exceeding certain that God did give you the second blessing, properly so called. He delivered you from the root of bitterness, from inbred as well as actual sin. And at that time you were enabled to give him all your heart ; to rejoice evermore, and to pray without ceasing. Afterward he permitted his work to be tried ; and sometimes as by fire. For a while you were not moved ; but could say in all things, “ Good is the will

of the Lord." But it seems you gave way, by little and little, till you were in some measure shorn of your strength. What have brother Barton and you to do, but to arise at once, and shake yourselves from the dust? Stir up the gift of God that is in you! Look unto Him that is mighty to save! Is he not able, in every sense, to turn your captivity? He has not forgotten to be gracious; neither will he shut up his loving kindness in displeasure. He is a God nigh at hand. Only believe; and help, while yet you ask, is given! Trust in him, and conquer all.

CXXXVI.—TO THE SAME.

London, December 30, 1774.

MY DEAR SISTER,—One observes well that, in order to judge of the grace which God has given us, we must likewise consider what our temptations are; because a little grace will balance little temptations; but to conquer great temptations much grace is requisite. Formerly you had comparatively little temptation; and, through his grace, you could rejoice with joy unspeakable. At present you do not find that joy. No; for you have the temptations which you had not then. You have little children; you have worldly care; and, frequently, a weak body. Therefore you may have far more grace than you had before, though you have not so much joy; nay, though you should for a time have no joy at all, but sorrow and heaviness; yea, though you should say, with your Master, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." O what a gainer are you by this, when you are enabled to say in the midst of all, "The cup which *my Father* hath given me, shall I not drink it!" See how he loveth whom he chasteneth! And what is at the end? An eternal weight of glory! It is laid up for you both: taste of it now!

CXXXVII.—TO THE SAME.

London, November 6, 1781.

MY DEAR SISTER,—I am always well pleased to hear from you, especially when you tell me that God has dealt well with you. I trust he has yet greater blessings in store for you, and for the little flock at Beverley. I was glad of the little time we had together, and hoped it would not be in vain. I found love to your two little maidens. There is good seed sown in their hearts, which, if it be carefully watered, will probably bring forth fruit to your comfort and the glory of God. Let your husband and you go on hand in hand, stirring up the gift of God that is in you, and running with resignation and patience the race that is set before you. You have met, and undoubtedly will meet, with manifold temptations: but you have had full proof that God is faithful, who will never suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it. O tarry, then, the Lord's leisure! Be strong, and he shall comfort thy heart. And put thou thy trust in the Lord.

CXXXVIII.—TO MRS. ELIZABETH BENNIS, OF LIMERICK.

Pembroke, August 23, 1763.

MY DEAR SISTER,—You did well to write: this is one of the means which God generally uses to convey either light or comfort. Even while you are writing you will often find relief: frequently while we propose a doubt it is removed.

There is no doubt but what you at first experienced was a real foretaste of the blessing, although you were not properly possessed of it till the Whitsunday following; but it is very possible to cast away the gift of God, or to lose it by little and little; though I trust this is not the case with

you; and yet you may frequently be in heaviness, and may find your love to God not near so warm at some times as it is at others. Many wanderings, likewise, and many deficiencies, are consistent with pure love; but the thing you mean is the abiding witness of the Spirit touching this very thing. And this you may boldly claim, on the warrant of that word, "We have received the spirit that is of God, that we may know the things which are freely given to us of God."

CXXXIX.—TO THE SAME.

Manchester, March 29, 1766.

MY DEAR SISTER,—One of our preachers has lately advanced a new position among us,—that there is no direct or immediate witness of sanctification, but only a perception or consciousness that we are changed, filled with love, and cleansed from sin. But, if I understand you right, you find a direct testimony that you are a child of God.

Now, certainly, if God has given you this light, he did not intend that you should hide it under a bushel. "It is good to conceal the secrets of a king, but it is good to tell the loving kindness of the Lord." Every one ought to declare what God has done for his soul, and that with all simplicity: only care is to be taken to declare to several persons that part of our experience which they are severally able to bear; and some parts of it to such alone as are upright and simple of heart.

One reason why those who are saved from sin should freely declare it to believers is, because nothing is a stronger incitement to them to seek after the same blessing. And we ought, by every possible means, to press every serious believer to forget the things which are behind, and with all earnestness go on to perfection. Indeed, if they are not thirsting after this, it is scarce possible to keep what they have: they can hardly retain any power of faith, if they are not panting after holiness

A thousand infirmities are consistent even with the highest degree of holiness ; which is no other than pure love, a heart devoted to God ; one design and one desire. Then, whatever is done, either in word or deed, may be done in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Press after all the residue of the promises.

I am, my dear sister,

Your affectionate brother

CXL.—TO THE SAME.

Leeds, August 14, 1766.

MY DEAR SISTER,—Although I am at present exceedingly hurried with various business, yet love constrains me to write a few lines. Your letters are always welcome to me, as the picture of an honest and affectionate heart.

What you say concerning the witness of the Spirit is agreeable to all sound experience. We may, in some measure, be satisfied without it, in the time of broad sunshine ; but it is absolutely necessary in the time of clouds, and heaviness, and temptation ; otherwise it would be hardly possible to hold fast your confidence.

Beware of voluntary humility : even this may create a snare. In the “Thoughts on Christian Perfection,” and in the “Farther Thoughts,” you have the genuine experience of the adult children of God. Oppose that authority to the authority of any that contradict, (if reason and Scripture are disregarded,) and look daily for a deeper and fuller communion with God. O what is it to walk in the light as he is in the light !

Do not cease to pray for

Your truly affectionate brother.

CXLI.—TO THE SAME.

Dublin, July 25, 1767.

DEAR SISTER BENNIS,—When you write to me you have only to “think aloud,” just to open the window in your breast. When we love one another there is no need of either disguise or reserve: I love you, and I verily believe you love me: so you have only to write just what you feel.

The essential part of Christian holiness is giving the heart wholly to God; and certainly we need not lose any degree of that light and love which at first attend this: it is our own infirmity if we do; it is not the will of the Lord concerning us. Your present business is, not to reason whether you should call your experience thus or thus; but to go straight to Him that loves you, with all your wants, how great or how many soever they are. ‘Then all things are ready; help, while you ask, is given. You have only to receive it by simple faith. Nevertheless you will still be encompassed with numberless infirmities; for you live in a house of clay, and therefore this corruptible body will, more or less, press down the soul, yet not so as to prevent your rejoicing evermore, and having a witness that your heart is all his. You may claim this: it is yours; for Christ is yours. Believe, and feel him near.

My dear sister, adieu.

CXLII.—TO THE SAME.

Cork, May 30, 1769.

DEAR SISTER,—Some years since, I was inclined to think that none who had once enjoyed and then lost the pure love of God must ever look to enjoy it again till they were just stepping into eternity. But experience has taught us better things: we have at present numerous instances of those who had cast away that unspeakable

blessing, and now enjoy it in a larger measure than ever. And why should not this be your case? Because you are unworthy? So were they. Because you have been an unfaithful steward? So had they been also; yet God healed them freely; and so he will you, only do not reason against him. Look for nothing in yourself but sin and unworthiness. Forget yourself. Worthy is the Lamb, and he has prevailed for you. You shall not die, but live; live all the life of heaven on earth. You need nothing in order to this but faith; and who gives this? He that standeth at the door.

I hope to see you at Limerick on Monday next; and I pray, let there never more be any reserve between you and

Your truly affectionate, &c.

CXLIII.—TO THE SAME.

Dublin, July 24, 1769.

DEAR SISTER,—If the reading over your papers has no other effect, this it certainly has,—it makes me love you abundantly better than I did before: I have now a more intimate knowledge of you; I enter more into your spirit, your tempers, and hopes, and fears, and desires; all which tends to endear you to me. It is plain, one of your constant enemies, and the most dangerous of all is evil reasoning. Accordingly the thing which you chiefly want is Christian simplicity. Brother Bourke and you should carefully watch over each other in that respect, and let each deal faithfully with the other; let there be no reserve between you; encourage one another also to pray for and expect the continual and direct witness of the Spirit. My dear friend, remember

Yours affectionately, &c.

CXLIV.—TO THE SAME.

Ashby, July 27, 1770.

DEAR SISTER,—Will you ever find in yourself any thing but unfitness? Otherwise your salvation would be of works, not of grace. But you are frequently sick of a bad disease, evil reasoning; which hinders both your holiness and happiness: you want the true Christian simplicity, which is indeed the highest wisdom. Nothing is more clear, according to the plain Bible account, than sanctification; pure love reigning in the heart and life. And nothing is more plain than the necessity of this, in order to feel happiness here and hereafter. Check all reasoning concerning these first principles, else you will exceedingly darken your soul; and go on denying yourself, and taking up your cross, until you

“Sink into perfection’s height,
The depth of humble love.”

Still draw near to the fountain by simple faith, and take all you want; but be not slothful in your Lord’s vineyard.

CXLV.—TO THE SAME.

Dublin, July 20, 1771.

MY DEAR SISTER,—I am much pleased to hear so good an account of J. C——. If I was resolved to understand all God’s dispensations, I should embrace his opinion; because it in a manner accounts for some things which otherwise are unaccountable. But this I do not expect: I am content to understand exceeding little, while I am in the body. What He does, I know not now: it is enough that I shall know hereafter. Our business now is to love and obey: knowledge is reserved for eternity. My chief objection to Milton’s doctrine of election is, that I cannot reconcile it to the words of St. Peter, which manifestly refer to the eternal state of men: “God is no respecter of

persons." Now how can we allow this, if we believe he places one man, as it were, suspended between heaven and hell, while he fixes another, ere ever he is born, under an absolute impossibility of missing heaven ?

I am well pleased you see some reason to hope well of Mr. T——. Speak closely to him. He has a strong, cultivated understanding, and would make a shining Christian. If he continues serious, he will not long be pleased with his former company: they will grow tasteless, nay, irksome.

It is not material whether this or that infirmity or defect be consistent with this or that gift of God. Without reasoning about this, it is your part simply to spread all your wants before Him who loves you; and he will richly supply them all.

CXLVI.—TO THE SAME.

Rye, October 28, 1771.

MY DEAR SISTER,—It is no wonder that finite cannot measure infinite; that man cannot comprehend the ways of God. There always will be something incomprehensible, something like himself, in all his dispensations. We must therefore be content to be ignorant until eternity opens our understanding; particularly with regard to the reasons of his acting thus or thus. These we shall be acquainted with when in Abraham's bosom.

As thinking is the act of an imbodied spirit, playing upon a set of material keys, it is not strange that the soul can make but ill music when her instrument is out of tune. This is frequently the case with you; and the trouble and anxiety you then feel are a natural effect of the disordered machine, which proportionably disorders the mind. But this is not all: as long as you have to wrestle not only with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, wise as well as powerful, will they not serve themselves of every bodily weakness to increase the distress of the

soul? But let them do as they may; let our frail bodies concur with subtle and malicious spirits; yet see that you cast not away your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." Whereunto you have attained, hold fast; and when you feel the roughest and strongest assault, when the enemy comes in like a flood, do not reason, do not (in one sense) fight with him; but sink down in the presence of your Lord, and simply look up, telling him, "Lord, I cannot help myself; I have neither wisdom nor strength for this war; but I am thine, I am all thine: undertake for me: let none pluck me out of thine hands. Keep that safe which is committed to thee, and preserve it unto that day."

CXLVII.—TO THE SAME.

Bristol, September 10, 1773.

MY DEAR SISTER,—When two or three agree to seek God by fasting and prayer, it cannot be that their labour should be in vain; especially if they add their endeavours to their prayers for the increase of the work of God. I hope you will encourage every preacher to visit the whole society in order, from house to house: dinner, or drinking tea, does not answer the same intention. This may and ought to be done over and above.

I thought you had been in more danger of being hurt by worldly abundance than worldly care. But we cannot stand under either one or the other, unless we be endued with power from on high; and that continually, from hour to hour, or rather from moment to moment. Yet distress is not sin: we may be grieved, and still resigned. And this is acceptable with God. In all these cases you should remember that observation, never to be let slip,—

"With even mind thy course of duty run:
 God nothing does, or suffers to be done,
 But thou wouldst do thyself, if thou couldst see
 The end of all events as well as he!"

CXLVIII.—TO THE SAME.

Sheerness, December 1, 1773.

MY DEAR SISTER,—Some time since, when I heard brother Bennis had got very rich, I was in fear for you, lest the world should again find a way into your heart, and damp your noblest affections. I am not sorry that you have not that temptation. It is most desirable to have neither poverty nor riches; but still you cannot be without temptation, unless you would go out of the world. How far that sudden emotion which you speak of is a preternatural dart from Satan, and how far it springs from your own heart, it is exceeding hard to judge. It is possible it may be neither one nor the other, but a mere effect of the natural mechanism of the body, which has no more of good or evil than blushing or turning pale. But whether it be natural or preternatural, it is grievous to one whose conscience is tender. We may therefore undoubtedly pray against it. And surely He can and will deliver us. Come therefore boldly to the throne of grace, and find grace to help in time of need.

You will find full employment in Waterford: I believe that society wants your exertions. See, therefore, that you be not weary of well doing.

CXLIX.—TO THE SAME.

London, January 18, 1774.

MY DEAR SISTER,—A will steadily and uniformly devoted to God is essential to a state of sanctification; but not a uniformity of joy, or peace, or happy communion with God. These may rise and fall in various degrees; nay, and may be affected either by the body or by diabolical agency, in a manner which all our wisdom can neither understand nor prevent. As to wanderings, you would do right well to consider the sermon on wandering thoughts.

You might likewise profit by Elizabeth Harper's Journal, whose experience much resembled yours, only she was more simple: and you may learn from her to go straight to God, as a little child, and tell him all your troubles, and hinderances, and doubts; and desire him to turn them all to good. You are not sent to Waterford to be useless. Stir up the gift of God which is in you; gather together those that have been scattered abroad, and make up a band, if not a class or two. Your best way would be to visit from house to house. By this means you can judge of their conduct and dispositions in domestic life, and may have opportunity to speak to the young of the family. By motion you will contract warmth; by imparting life, you will increase it in yourself.

As to the circumstance mentioned in the postscript of your last, I should think you would do well to exert yourself in that matter as much as possible. It will be a cross: take up that cross; bear your cross, and it will bear you; and if you do it with a single eye, it will be no loss to your soul.

CL.—TO THE SAME.

London, March 1, 1774.

MY DEAR SISTER,—Elizabeth Harper was frequently in clouds too; and in that case it is the best way to stand still: you can do nothing but simply tell all your wants to Him that is both able and willing to supply them.

I enclose James Perfect's letter, on purpose that you may talk with him. He has both an honest heart and a good understanding; but you entirely mistake his doctrine. He preaches salvation by faith in the same manner that my brother and I have done; and as Mr. Fletcher (one of the finest writers of the age) has beautifully explained it. None of us talk of being accepted for our works: that is the Calvinist slander. But we all maintain, we are not saved without works; that works are a condition (though

not the meritorious cause) of final salvation. It is by faith in the righteousness and blood of Christ that we are enabled to do all good works; and it is for the sake of these that all who fear God and work righteousness are accepted of him.

It is far better for our people not to hear Mr. Hawksworth. Calvinism will do them no good: as to the rest, I refer to my enclosure to Mr. M——, with whom I wish you to have some conversation. Be not discouraged: I really believe God will visit poor Waterford in love. Do you go on. Bear up the hands that hang down; by faith and prayer support the tottering knee; reprove, encourage. Have you appointed any days of fasting and prayer? Storm the throne of grace, and persevere therein, and mercy will come down.

CLI.—TO THE SAME.

Leeds, May 2, 1774.

MY DEAR SISTER,—Until Mr. Hill and his associates puzzled the cause, it was as plain as plain could be. The Methodists always held, and have declared a thousand times, the death of Christ is the meritorious cause of our salvation, that is, of pardon, holiness, and glory; loving, obedient faith is the condition of glory. This Mr. Fletcher has so illustrated and confirmed as I think scarcely any one has done before since the apostles.

When Mr. W—— wrote me a vehement letter concerning the abuse he had received from the young men in Limerick, and his determination to put them all out of the society, if they did not acknowledge their fault, I much wondered what could be the matter, and only wrote him word, “I never put any out of our society for any thing they say of me.” You are come in good time to make peace. Go on and prosper.

CLII.—TO THE SAME.

London, December 21, 1776.

MY DEAR SISTER,—You are a great deal less happy than you would be, if you did not reason too much. This frequently gives that subtle adversary an advantage against you. You have need to be continually as a little child, simply looking up for whatever you want.

It is devoutly to be wished for, that we may rejoice evermore; and it is certain, the inward kingdom of God implies not only righteousness and peace, but joy in the Holy Ghost. You have therefore reason to ask for and expect the whole gospel blessing. Yet it cannot be denied that many times joy is withheld, even from them that walk uprightly. The great point of all is, a heart and a life entirely devoted to God. Keep only this, and let all the rest go: give him your heart, and it sufficeth.

CLIII.—TO MR. JOSEPH BENSON.

London, December 4, 1768.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I cannot yet convince you of one thing, (and it is a thing of importance,) that you may make greater progress in valuable knowledge by reading those books, (particularly if read in that order,) than you can by reading any other books which are now extant in England. It follows, that your friend B——, in this respect, is not your friend; for he puts you out of your way; he retards you in the attainment of the most useful knowledge. He gratifies your curiosity (a bad principle too) at the expense of your improvement. It is better for you to read these books than his; which (if they are not hurtful or dangerous, at least) do not lead directly to the end you propose. Choose the best way.

CLIV.—TO THE SAME.

Shoreham, December 22, 1768.

MY DEAR JOSEPH,—You do not quite take my meaning yet. When I recommend to any one a method or scheme of study, I do not barely consider this or that book separately, but in conjunction with the rest. And what I recommend I know: I know both the style and sentiments of each author; and how he will confirm or illustrate what goes before, and prepare for what comes after. Now supposing Mr. Stonehouse, Roquet, or any other, to have ever so great learning and judgment, yet he does not enter into my plan. He does not comprehend my views, nor keep his eye fixed on the same point. Therefore I must insist upon it, the interposing other books between these till you have read them through, is not good husbandry. It is not making your time and pains go so far as they might go. If you want more books, let me recommend more, who best understand my own scheme. And do not ramble, however learned the persons may be that advise you so to do. This does indulge curiosity, but does not minister to real improvement, as a stricter method would do. No; you would gain more clearness and strength of judgment by reading those Latin and Greek books, (compared with which most of the English are whipped syllabub,) than by fourscore modern books. I have seen the proof as none of your Bristol friends have done, or can do. Therefore I advise you again, keep to your plan, (though this implies continual self-denial,) if you would improve your understanding to the highest degree of which it is capable.

CLV.—TO THE SAME.

Cork, May 27, 1769.

DEAR JOSEPH,—You have now (what you never had before) a clear providential call to Oxford. If you keep a

single eye, and have courage and steadiness, you may be an instrument of much good. But you will tread on slippery ground; and the serious persons you mention may do you more hurt than many others. When I was at Oxford, I never was afraid of any but the almost Christians. If you give way to them and their prudence a hair's breadth, you will be removed from the hope of the gospel. If you are not moved, if you tread in the same steps which my brother and I did, you may be a means, under God, of raising another set of real Bible Christians. How long the world will suffer them (whether longer than they did us or not) is in God's hand.

With regard to Kingswood school, I have one string more: if that breaks, I shall let it drop. I have borne the burden one and twenty years; I have done what I could; now let some one else do more.

CLVI.—TO THE SAME.

Bristol, October 5, 1770.

DEAR JOSEPH,—You need no apology for your writing: the more frequently and freely you write, the better. I cannot doubt but your neighbour means well; but he is a thorough enthusiast, and has hardly one clear conception of any thing, natural or spiritual. Mr. Keard, from Aberdeen, and Mr. Wooton, (our new writing-master, a man of an excellent spirit,) are at Kingswood. But does Mr. J—— know the price?—Sixteen pounds a year. Does he know the rules of the school? Again: of what age are the children? I will take none that is above nine years old: now, especially, because I will not have our children corrupted; nine of whom, together with our three maid-servants, have just now experienced a gracious visitation, and are rejoicing in a pardoning God.

I am glad you had the courage to speak your mind on so critical an occasion. At all hazards do so still; only with all possible tenderness and respect. She is **much**

devoted to God, and has a thousand valuable and amiable qualities. There is no great fear that I should be prejudiced against one whom I have intimately known for these thirty years. And I know what is in man; therefore I make large allowance for human weaknesses. But what you say is exactly the state of the case. They are "jealous of their authority." Truly there is no cause: *longe mea discrepat illi et vox et ratio*.* I fear and shun, not desire authority of any kind. Only when God lays that burden upon me I bear it for his and the people's sake.

"Child," said my father to me when I was young, "you think to carry every thing by dint of argument. But you will find, by and by, how very little is ever done in the world by clear reason." Very little indeed! It is true of almost all men, except so far as we are taught of God,—

"Against experience we believe,
We argue against demonstration;
Pleased while our reason we deceive,
And set our judgment by our passion."

Passion and prejudice govern the world; only under the name of reason. It is our part, by religion and reason joined, to counteract them all we can. It is yours, in particular, to do all that in you lies to soften the prejudices of those that are around about you, and to calm the passions from which they spring. Blessed are the peace-makers!

You judge rightly: perfect love and Christian liberty are the very same thing; and those two expressions are equally proper, being equally Scriptural. "Nay, how can they and you mean the same thing? They say you insist on holiness in the creature, on good tempers, and sin destroyed." Most surely. And what is Christian liberty, but another word for holiness? And where is this liberty or holiness, if it is not in the creature? Holiness is the love of God and man, or the mind which was in Christ. Now,

* This quotation from Horace is thus translated by Boscauwen:—

"Far different are my thoughts and strain."—ED.

I trust, the love of God is shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto you. And if you are holy, is not that mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus?

And are not the love of God and our neighbour good tempers? And so far as these reign in the soul are not the opposite tempers, worldly-mindedness, malice, cruelty, revengefulness, destroyed? Indeed, the unclean spirit, though driven out, may return and enter again: nevertheless, he was driven out. I use the word *destroyed*, because St. Paul does: *suspended* I cannot find in my Bible. "But they say you do not consider this as the consequence of the power of Christ dwelling in us." Then what will they not say? My very words are, "None feel their need of Christ like these; none so entirely depend upon him. For Christ does not give light to the soul separate from, but in and with, himself. Hence his words are equally true of all men, in whatever state of grace they are: 'As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me: without' (or separate from) 'me, ye can do nothing.' For our perfection is not like that of a tree, which flourishes by the sap derived from its own root; but like that of a branch, which, united to the vine, bears fruit; but, severed from it, is 'dried up and withered.'"

At length, *veris vincor*.* I am constrained to believe (what I would not for a long time) these are not the objections of judgment, but of passion; they do not spring from the head, but the heart. Whatever I say, it will be all one. They will find fault, because I say it. There is implicit envy at my power, (so called,) and a jealousy rising therefrom. Hence prejudice in a thousand forms; hence objections springing up like mushrooms. And while those causes remain, they will spring up, whatever I can do or say. However, keep thyself pure; and then there need be no strangeness between you and,

Dear Joseph,

Your affectionate brother

*I am overcome by the force of truth.—Ed.

CLVII.—TO THE SAME.

London, November 30, 1770.

DEAR JOSEPH,—For several years I had been deeply convinced that I had not done my duty with regard to that valuable woman ; that I had not told her what, I was thoroughly assured, no one else would dare to do, and what I knew she would bear from no other person, but possibly might bear from me. But being unwilling to give her pain, I put it off from time to time. At length I did not dare to delay any longer, lest death should call one of us hence. So I at once delivered my own soul, by telling her all that was in my heart. It was *my business*, my proper business, so to do ; as none else either could or would do it. Neither did I take at all too much upon me : I know the office of a Christian minister. If she is not profited, it is her own fault, not mine : I have done my duty. I do not know there is one charge in that letter which was either unjust, unimportant, or aggravated ; any more than that against the doggerel hymns, which are equally an insult upon poetry and common sense.

We had a good time, both at the Tabernacle and Tottenham-court Chapel. The congregations were immense. Perhaps not a third part could come within hearing ; and they were more quiet than could well have been expected. The sermon will be published on Monday, and sent down to Bristol. Mr. Keen and Hardy, his executors, have, I apprehend, the whole and sole disposal of the Tabernacle, Tottenham-court Chapel, and all the other houses which were occupied by Mr. Whitefield. The Chapel and Tabernacle are supplied by Mr. Joss and Brooksbank ; and Mr. Neale administers the sacrament there.

I find no such sin as legality in the Bible : the very use of the term speaks an Antinomian. I defy all liberty, but liberty to love and serve God ; and fear no bondage, but bondage to sin. Sift that text to the bottom, and it will do the business of poor H—— and all his disciples : “ God

sent his own Son in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us." *Justitia legis, justitia legalis!** Here is legality indeed!

I am glad you come a little nearer the good old emperor's advice, *Τὴν τῶν βιβλίων διψαν ριπτε.*† That thirst is the symptom of an evil disease; and *crescit indulgens sibi dirus hydrops.*‡ What is the real value of a thing, but the price it will bear in eternity? Let no study swallow up, or intrench upon, the hours of private prayer. *Nihil tanti.*§ Simplify both religion and every part of learning as much as possible. Be all alive to God, and you will be useful to men!

CLVIII.—TO THE SAME.

London, December 28, 1770.

DEAR JOSEPH,—What a blessing it is, that we can speak freely to each other, without either disguise or reserve! So long as we are able to do this, we may grow wiser and better every day.

One point I advise you to hold fast, and let neither men nor devils tear it from you. You are a child of God; you are justified freely, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. Your sins are forgiven! Cast not away that confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.

Now can any be justified but by faith? None can. Therefore you are a believer; you have faith in Christ; you know the Lord; you can say, "My Lord and my God." And whoever denies this, may as well deny that the sun shines at noonday.

"Yet still ten thousand lusts remain,
And vex your soul, absolved from sin;
Still rebel nature strives to reign,
And you are all unclean, unclean!"

* The righteousness of the law is legal righteousness.—ED.

† Throw away that thirst for books.—ED.

‡ The dreadful dropsy increases by indulgence.—ED.

§ Nothing is of so much importance.—ED.

This is equally clear and undeniable. And this is not only your experience, but the experience of a thousand believers besides, who yet are sure of God's favour as of their own existence. To cut off all doubt on this head, I beg you to give another serious reading to those two sermons, "Sin in Believers," and "The Repentance of Believers."

"But is there no help? Is there no deliverance, no salvation from this inbred enemy?" Surely there is, else many great and precious promises must fall to the ground. "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you." "I will circumcise thy heart," (from all sin,) "to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul." This I term sanctification, (which is both an instantaneous and a gradual work,) or perfection, the being perfected in love, filled with love, which still admits of a thousand degrees. But I have no time to throw away in contending for words, especially where the thing is allowed. And you allow the whole thing which I contend for; an entire deliverance from sin, a recovery of the whole image of God, the loving God with all our heart, soul, and strength. And you believe God is able to give you this; yea, to give it you in an instant. You trust he will. O hold fast this also; this blessed hope, which he has wrought in your heart! And with all zeal and diligence confirm the brethren,—1. In holding fast that whereto they have attained; namely, the remission of all their sins by faith in a bleeding Lord: 2. In expecting a second change, whereby they shall be saved from all sin, and perfected in love.

If they like to call this "receiving the Holy Ghost," they may: only the phrase, in that sense, is not Scriptural, and not quite proper; for they all "received the Holy Ghost" when they were justified. God then "sent forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

O Joseph, keep close to the Bible, both as to sentiment

and expression! Then there will never be any material difference between you and

Your affectionate brother.

This morning I have calmly and coolly read over my letter to L—— H——. I still believe every line of it is true. And I am assured I spoke the truth in love. It is great pity, any who wish her well should skin over the wounds which are there searched. As long as she resents that office of true esteem, her grace can be but small!

CLIX.—TO THE SAME.

London, January 8, 1774.

DEAR JOSEPH,—Many persons are in danger of reading too little: you are in danger of reading too much. Wherever you are, take up your cross, and visit all the society from house to house. Do this according to Mr. Baxter's plan, laid down in the Minutes of the Conference. The fruit which will ensue (perhaps in a short time) will abundantly reward your labour. Fruit also we shall have, even in those who have no outward connection with us.

I am glad you "press all believers" to aspire after the full liberty of the children of God. They must not give up their faith in order to do this: herein you formerly seemed to be in some mistake. Let them go on from faith to faith; from weak faith to that strong faith which not only conquers but casts out sin. Meantime it is certain, many call themselves believers who do not even conquer sin; who are strangers to the whole inward kingdom of God, and void of the whole fruit of the Spirit.

We must not go on at Dunbar in this manner. Rather, we must quit the place. For who will pay that debt?

On Tuesday I was under the surgeon's hands, but am now (blessed be God) quite recovered.

CLX.—TO THE SAME.

Near London, February 22, 1776.

DEAR JOSEPH,—We must threaten no longer, but perform. In November last I told the London society, "Our rule is, to meet a class once a week; not once in two or three. I now give you warning: I will give tickets to none in February but those that have done this." I have stood to my word. Go you and do likewise, wherever you visit the classes. Begin, if need be, at Newcastle, and go on at Sunderland. Promises to meet are now out of date. Those that have not met seven times in the quarter exclude. Read their names in the society; and inform them all you will the next quarter exclude all that have not met twelve times: that is, unless they were hindered by distance, sickness, or by some unavoidable business.

And I pray, without fear or favour, remove the leaders, whether of classes or bands, who do not watch over the souls committed to their care "as those that must give account."

CLXI.—TO THE SAME.

October 22, 1776.

DEAR JOSEPH,—I apprehend Joseph Fothergill was not designedly omitted. I take him to be a good man, and a good preacher.

You did right in excluding from our society so notorious an offender. And you have now a providential call to stand in the gap between the living and the dead. Fear nothing. Begin in the name of God, and go through with the work. If only six will promise you to sin no more, leave only six in the society. But my belief is, a hundred and fifty are now clear of blame; and if you are steady, a hundred more will amend. You must, at all events, tear up this evil by the roots. The "Word to a Smuggler" should be read and dispersed. And secure your fellow-labourers, that you may all speak one thing. Go on, for God is with you!

CLXII.—TO THE SAME.

Chatham, November 26, 1776.

DEAR JOSEPH,—If any leader oppose, you see your remedy: put another in his place. Nay, if he does not join heart and hand; for “he that gathereth not with you scattereth.” The “Word to a Smuggler” is plain and home, and has done much good in these parts.

Taking opium is full as bad as taking drams. It equally hurts the understanding, and is, if possible, more pernicious to the health than even rum or brandy. None should touch it, if they have the least regard either for their souls or bodies.

I really think you are in the right. It is better to help R—— W—— where he is, than to burden the Dales with an additional weight. But then what shall we do? We have no supernumerary preachers. See if you can do any thing with Edward Jackson.

CLXIII.—TO THE SAME.

London, December 8, 1777.

DEAR JOSEPH,—Undoubtedly Bishop Newton's book on the prophecies is well written. And he is certainly a man of sense, and of considerable learning. This he has shown in what he writes on the Revelation. But with regard to the passage you mention, I cannot agree with him at all. I believe the Romish Antichrist is already so fallen that he will not again lift up his head in any considerable degree. The bishop of Rome has little more power now than any other of the Italian princes. I therefore concur with you in believing his tyranny is past, never to return.

But there is no comparison, either as to sense, learning, or piety, between Bishop Newton and Bengelius. The former is a mere child to the latter. I advise you to give another serious and careful reading to that extract from his Comment on the Revelation, which concludes the Notes. There you have one uniform consistent [view,] far beyond

any I ever saw. And I verily believe, the more deeply you consider it, the more you will admire it.

Does any one deny that a kite is bigger than a lark? or that Ogilvie has written a larger book than Virgil? And certainly there are larger Magazines than ours: but it does not follow that they are better. Ours is reduced to half the price, and will contain forty-eight pages, which is the usual number for sixpence.

We are called to propagate Bible religion through the land; that is, faith working by love; holy tempers, and holy lives. Let us do it with our might!

CLXIV.—TO THE SAME.

Warrington, May 21, 1781.

DEAR JOSEPH,—As I have not leisure myself, I am exceedingly glad that you have entered into the lists with Mr. A——. And I am in hopes you will “reply at large” to all his cavils and objections. If he cites any thing from me, you should answer simply, “I never undertook to defend every sentiment of Mr. W——’s. He does not expect or desire it. He wishes me and every man to think for himself.”

If you remember, I do not insist on the term *impression*. I say again, I will thank any one that will find a better; be it *discovery*, *manifestation*, *deep sense*, or whatever it may. That *some consciousness* of our being in favour with God, is joined with Christian faith, I cannot doubt; but it is not the essence of it. A consciousness of pardon cannot be the condition of pardon.

But I am still more glad that you have some thoughts of answering that pernicious book of poor Mr. Madan. Analyze it first with the postscript; then overturn it thoroughly, from the beginning to the end. You may steer between the extremes of too much roughness and too much smoothness. And see that you are plain enough for women and pretty gentlemen. I allow you a hundred pages.

I am, dear Joseph,

Your affectionate friend and brother.

CLXV.—TO THE SAME.

Bristol, September 17, 1788.

DEAR JOSEPH,—I am glad you have determined to correct Mr. Fletcher's Letters. You will observe that it is "dangerous, on such subjects, to depart from Scripture, either as to language or sentiment;" and I believe that "most of the controversies which have disturbed the church have arisen from people's wanting to be wise above what is written, not contented with what God has plainly revealed there." What have you or I to do with that "difficulty?" I dare not, will not, reason about it for a moment. I believe just what is revealed, and no more; but I do not pretend to account for it, or to solve the difficulties that may attend it. Let angels do this, if they can; but I think they cannot. I think even these

"Would find no end, in wandering mazes lost."

Some years since, I read about fifty pages of Dr. Watts's ingenious treatise upon the "Glorified Humanity of Christ." But it so confounded my intellects, and plunged me into such unprofitable reasonings, yea, dangerous ones, that I would not have read it through for five hundred pounds. It led him into Arianism. Take care that similar tracts (all of which I abhor) have not the same effect upon you.

I like your thoughts upon Materialism; as I doubt not I should those on the separate existence of the soul. It will be best to print at Hull or York, if you can print almost as cheap, and have as good paper. Should there not be a thousand copies? Then you will reserve a hundred of them for yourself.

CLXVI.—TO MR. WALTER CHURCHEY, OF BRECON.

Dublin, June 20, 1789.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—Michael — is an original. He tells lies innumerable, many of them plausible enough. But many talk full as plausibly as he; and they that can believe him, may. I do not doubt but some part of your verse, as well as prose, will reach the hearts of some of the rich,

Dr. Coke made two or three little alterations in the Prayer Book without my knowledge. I took particular care throughout to alter nothing merely for altering's sake. In religion I am for as few innovations as possible. I love the old wine best. And if it were only on this account, I prefer "*which*" before "*who* art in heaven."

Mr. Howard is really an extraordinary man. God has raised him up to be a blessing to many nations. I do not doubt but there has been something more than natural in his preservation hitherto, and should not wonder if the providence of God should hereafter be still more conspicuous in his favour.

About three weeks hence I expect to embark for England. Peace be with you and yours!

CLXVII.—TO THE SAME.

1789.

I HAVE now revised the five volumes of my brother's hymns on the four gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. He had himself revised them no less than seven times in the space of twenty years. Many of them are little or nothing inferior to the best of them that have been printed. Those of them that savour a little of mysticism I have rather corrected or expunged; but I have no thought or design at all of printing them. I have other work to do which is of more immediate importance. Besides that, I have not two or three hundred pounds to spare. I will order my printer to strike off some of your preposals, which I will then occasionally recommend to my friends. Some of them I know will subscribe; and it may be, God will incline the hearts of more than I am aware of. But with whom do you agree for paper and printing? Proceed warily, or you may get into much trouble. That God may bless you and yours, and be your Guide in this and in all things, is the prayer of
Your affectionate brother.*

* Mr. Churchey was now about to publish his large volume of poems, which Mr. Wesley permitted him to print at his own press.—ED.

CLXVIII.—TO A YOUNG DISCIPLE.

January 25, 1771.

As you desire a few directions with regard to the improvement of your mind, I will set down just what occur to me at present. Only as my business is great, and my time is short, I cannot stay to explain them at large.

All the knowledge you want is comprised in one book—the Bible. When you understand this, you will know enough. I advise you, therefore, to begin every day (before or after private prayer) with reading a portion, more or less, of the Old or New Testament, or of both, if you have time, together with the Notes, which may lead you by the hand into suitable meditation. After breakfast, you may read, in order, the volumes of Sermons, and the other practical books which we have published ; more or less at a time, (as other business permits,) with meditation and prayer. Young, Milton, and the Moral and Sacred Poems, you may read chiefly in the afternoons. Whatever you write, you should write in the forenoons. Take care never to read or write too long at a time. That is not conducive either to bodily or spiritual health. If I can be of use to you in any thing else, tell me : you know you may speak freely to

Yours affectionately.

CLXIX.—TO THE SAME.

Bandon, May 2, 1771.

THERE is no fear I should forget you, especially at this time, when all the powers of hell are engaged against you ; but let them come about you like bees, they shall be extinct as the fire among the thorns. Tempted you are, and will be ; otherwise you could not know your own weakness, and the strength of your Master. But all temptations will “work together for good ;” all are for your profit, that you may be partaker of his holiness. You may always have an evidence both of God’s love to you, and of yours to him. And at some times the former may be more clear ; at other

times, the latter. It is enough if, in one case or the other, you simply stay your soul upon him. S. Harper's is the ordinary experience of those who are renewed in love. S. Jackson's experience is quite extraordinary, and what very few of them have yet attained.

There is a danger of every believer's mistaking the voice of the enemy, or of their own imagination, for the voice of God. And you can distinguish one from the other, not by any written rule, but only by the unction of the Holy One. This only teaches Christian prudence, consistent with simplicity and godly sincerity. The four volumes of Sermons, the Appeals, the Notes, and the Extracts from Mr. Law's Works, and from Dr. Young, might best suit you now; meddle with nothing that does not suit your present temper. Meet with them that meet on a Friday, and speak in God's name, without fear or shame. The general rule, "not to correspond but with those who have both grace and understanding," admits of several exceptions, in favour of a few who want one of them, or the other, or both. Be not afraid of writing too long letters to me.

CLXX.—TO THE SAME.

Galway, May 20, 1771.

YOUR concern is with the present moment: your business is, to live to-day. In every sense let the morrow take thought for the things of itself. It is true, the full assurance of hope excludes all doubt of our final salvation; but it does not, and cannot, continue any longer than we walk closely with God. And it does not include any assurance of our future behaviour; neither do I know any word in all the Bible which gives us any authority to look for a testimony of this kind. But just so far you may certainly go, with regard to the present moment,—

"I want the witness, Lord,
That all I do is right:
According to thy will and word,
Well pleasing in thy sight."

Seriously and steadily, my dear maid, aim at this; and you will not be disappointed of your hope. With regard to the impression you speak of, I am in doubt whether it be not a temptation from the enemy. It may occasion many wrong tempers; it may feed both pride and uncharitableness. And the Bible gives us no authority to think ill of any one, but from plain, undeniable, overt acts.

Rollin was a pious man, and a fine historian. If you read one volume, you would feel whether it enlivened or deadened your soul. The same trial you may make as to serious poetry. Very probably this would enliven your soul; and certainly the volumes of philosophy may, as Galen entitles his description of the human body, "A Hymn to the Creator." Temporal business need not interrupt your communion with God, though it varies the manner of it. It is certain every promise has a condition; yet that does not make the promise of none effect; but by the promise you are encouraged and enabled to fulfil the condition. You might like it better were there no condition; but that would not answer the design of Him that makes it. It is certain there are times of nearer access to God, and that it nearly imports us to improve those precious seasons. But we may find plausible objections against this; and, indeed, against any thing.

CLXXI.—TO THE SAME.

Dublin, July 13, 1771.

TRUTH and falsehood, and so right and wrong tempers, are often divided by an almost imperceptible line. It is the more difficult to distinguish right and wrong tempers, or passions, because, in several instances, the same motion of the blood and animal spirits will attend both one and the other. Therefore, in many cases, we cannot distinguish them but by the unction of the Holy One. In the case you mention, all self-complacency or self-approbation is not pride. Certainly there may be self-approbation, which is not sin, though it must occasion a degree of plea-

sure. "This is our rejoicing, even the testimony of our conscience toward God." And this joy is neither better nor worse for being accompanied with a natural motion of the blood and spirits. Equally natural, and equally innocent, is the joy which we receive from being approved by those we love. But, in all these instances, there is need of the utmost care lest we slide from innocent joy, or self-approbation, into that which is not innocent, into pride, (thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought to think,) or vanity, a desire of praise.

"For thin partitions do their bounds divide."

Be all in earnest.

CLXXII.—TO THE SAME.

The Hay, August 24, 1771.

If you find any comfort or help thereby, write on, without any reasoning about the matter. The various thoughts and suggestions you mention are just such as any person of a lively imagination may expect. Satan, too, very well knows whereof we are made, and always attacks us on the weak side. But these, and a thousand clouds passing over your mind, prove nothing as to the state of your heart: see that this be devoted to God, and it is enough. You have given it him: stand to your gift. However then your imagination may be affected, you will have the testimony of a good conscience toward God. Not but that you may plead that promise, "The peace of God shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." As the former word takes in all your passions, so does the latter all the workings of your reason and imagination. Pray, therefore, and look for the answer of your prayer. It shall come, and not tarry!

CLXXIII.—TO THE SAME.

Witney, October 16, 1771.

It is no fault to be grieved at the unkindness of those we love: only it may go to an excess; so that we have

need to watch in this, as in all things, seeing the life of man is a temptation upon earth. And it is no fault not to grieve for the censure we must often meet with for following our own conscience. Of those little ones you cannot be too tender or too careful; and as you are frequently alone, you may teach them many important lessons, as they are able to bear them. But it requires immense patience; for you must tell them the same thing ten times over, or you do nothing.

A higher degree of that peace which may well be said to "pass all understanding" will keep, not only your heart, but all the workings of your mind, (as the word properly signifies,) both of your reason and imagination, from all irregular sallies. This peace will increase as your faith increases: one always keeps pace with the other. So that on this account also your continual prayer should be, "Lord, increase my faith!" A continual desire is a continual prayer, that is, in a low sense of the word; for there is a far higher sense,—such an open intercourse with God, such a close, uninterrupted communion with him as G. Lopez experienced, and not a few of our brethren now alive. This you also should aspire after; as you know He with whom we have to do is no respecter of persons.

CLXXIV.—TO THE SAME.

January 5, 1772.

It is not always a defect to mind one thing at a time. And an aptness so to do, to employ the whole vigour of the mind on the thing in hand, may answer excellent purposes. Only you have need to be exceeding wary, lest the thing you pursue be wrong. First, be well assured not only that it is good, but that it is the best thing for you at that time; and then, whatsoever your hand findeth to do, do it with your might. But you have all things in one, the whole of religion contracted to a point, in that word, "Walk in love, as Christ also loved us and gave himself for us." All is contained in humble, gentle, patient love. Is not this, so

to speak, a divine contrivance to assist the narrowness of our minds, the scantiness of our understandings? Every right temper, and then all right words and actions, naturally branch out of love. In effect, therefore, you want nothing but this,—to be filled with the faith that worketh by love.

CLXXV.—TO THE SAME.

Leith, May 13, 1772.

To set the state of perfection too high is the surest way to drive it out of the world. The substance of that test, I believe, I have seen; and I judge it not consistent with humanity; I mean with the state of a human soul as long as it is united to a corruptible body. Do not puzzle yourself any more with these nice inquiries; but, in order to resettle your judgment, give another deliberate reading to the “Farther Thoughts,” or the “Plain Account of Christian Perfection.” He that long ago gave you to taste of his pardoning love gave you afterward a taste of his pure love. Whereunto you have attained, hold fast; never cast it away through a voluntary humility. But see that you do not rest there. Comparatively, forget the things that are behind. Reach forward! This one thing do: press on to the prize of your high calling.

CLXXVI.—TO THE SAME.

Whitby, June 20, 1772.

It is of admirable use to bear the weaknesses, nay, and even the faults, of the real children of God. And the temptations to anger which rise herefrom are often more profitable than any other. Yet surely, for the present, they are not joyous, but grievous: afterward comes the peaceable fruit. You shall have exactly as much pain and as much disappointment as will be most for your profit, and just sufficient to

“Keep you dead to all below,
Only Christ resolved to know.”

Never make it matter of reasoning that you have not either a larger or a smaller share of suffering. You shall have

exactly what is best both as to kind, degree, and time. O what a blessing is it to be in His hand who "doeth all things well!"

Of all gossiping, religious gossiping is the worst: it adds hypocrisy to uncharitableness, and effectually does the work of the devil in the name of the Lord. The leaders, in every society, may do much toward driving it out from among the Methodists. Let them, in the band or class, observe,—

1. "Now we are to talk of no absent person, but simply of God and our own souls."
2. "The rule of our conversation here is to be the rule of all our conversation. Let us observe it (unless in some necessarily exempt cases) at all times and in all places." If this be frequently inculcated, it will have an excellent effect.

Instead of giving a caution once, as to a grown person, you must give it to a child ten times. By this means you may keep a sensible child from an improper familiarity with servants. Cautions should also be given frequently and earnestly to servants themselves; and they will not always be thrown away, if they have either grace or sense.

CLXXVII.—TO THE SAME.

Bristol, August 31, 1772.

NONE are or can be saved but those who are by faith made inwardly and outwardly holy. But this holy faith is the gift of God; and he is never straitened for time. He can as easily give this faith in a moment as in a thousand years. He frequently does give it on a deathbed, in answer to the prayer of believers, but rarely, if ever, to those who had continued unholy, upon the presumption that he would save them at last. But if he did, what unspeakable losers must they be! Could grief be in heaven, they would grieve to eternity, seeing every one there shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

And *he* will perplex you more than enough, if you listen to his sallies of imagination: "Every one has some pursuit; therefore a man cannot be always in communion with

God." I deny the consequence. While Mr. De Renty was serving the poor, he was in constant communion with God. So was Gregory Lopez while he was writing books. "At first, indeed," as Lopez observed, "large manifestations from God were apt to suspend the exercise of his senses, as well as of his understanding. But, after some time, they made no difference at all, but left him the full exercise of his understanding and senses." I remember a much later instance of the same kind: an old clergyman told me, some years since, "I asked Mr. Boehm, (chaplain to Prince George of Denmark,) 'Sir, when you are in such a hurry of business, surrounded with a crowd of people, hearing one, and dictating to another, at the same time, does it not interrupt your mental prayer?' He answered immediately, 'All that hurry no more hinders my communion with God, than if I was all the time sitting alone in my study, or kneeling at the altar.'" No business, therefore, of any kind, no conversation, need hinder one that is strong in faith from rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, and in every thing giving thanks. Follow after this, and you will surely attain it.

CLXXVIII.—TO THE SAME.

March 23, 1773.

If useless words or thoughts spring from evil tempers, they are properly evil; otherwise, not; but still they are contrary to the Adamic law: yet not to the law of love; therefore there is no condemnation for them, but they are matter of humiliation before God. So are those (seemingly) unbelieving thoughts, although they are not your own, and you may boldly say, "Go, go, thou unclean spirit; thou shalt answer for these, and not I."

Your affections were apt to be too impetuous, and some times uneven too; but nature yields to healing grace, which I trust has made you both more calm and more steady: and what will it not make you if you persevere? All that is amiable, holy, and happy! Already He that loves you

gives you a taste of what he has prepared for you. Let patience have its perfect work ; and you shall be perfect and entire, lacking nothing. See that you make the best of life ! The time is short !

CLXXIX.—TO THE SAME.

July 23, 1773.

AT many times our advances in the race that is set before us are clear and perceptible ; at other times they are no more perceptible (at least to ourselves) than the growth of a tree. At any time you may pray,—

“ Strength and comfort from thy word
Imperceptibly supply.”

And when you perceive nothing, it does not follow that the work of God stands still in your soul, especially while your desire is unto him, and while you choose him for your portion. He does not leave you to yourself, though it may seem so to your apprehension. The difference between temptation and sin is generally plain enough to all that are simple of heart ; but in some exempt cases it is not plain : there we want the unction of the Holy One. Voluntary humility, calling every defect a sin, is not well pleasing to God. Sin, properly speaking, is neither more nor less than “ a voluntary transgression of a known law of God.”

There are a thousand instances wherein it is not possible literally to make restitution. All that we can advise in the case you mention is,—1. Let him that stole steal no more ; let him be from this hour rigorously just. 2. Let him be a faithful steward of the mammon of unrighteousness, restoring all he can to God in the poor.

CLXXX.—TO THE SAME.

August 20, 1773.

I OFTEN heard my own mother make the same complaint with you. She did not *feel* near so much as my father did ; but she *did* ten times more than he did. You must labour to *do* so much the more, and pray that God would supply

whatever is wanting. One degree of forgiveness is due to every one, though impenitent; still I love him as I love all men. But the other degree, whereby I should again receive him as a friend, is only due to one who says, "I repent;" that is, convinces me that he does really repent, and is entirely changed.

It is certain God has given you a talent, and I still think it ought to be used. I grant, indeed, to be hid and to be still is more agreeable to flesh and blood; but is it more agreeable to Him "who hath left us an example, that we might tread in his steps?"

One cannot be saved from evil tempers without being devoted to God; neither can a soul be all devoted to God without being saved from sin: but it is often exceeding hard to judge of others, whether they are saved from all evil tempers, and whether they are all devoted to God or not; yea, it is hard to judge of ourselves; nay, we cannot do it, without the anointing of the Holy One given for that very purpose. Out of darkness God will command light to shine. Be plain and open to all; then, whether they are sincere or insincere, you will have a conscience void of offence. You find all things work together for good. They must, while the hairs of your head are all numbered.

CLXXXI.—TO THE SAME.

Bristol, September 8, 1773.

WE have the clearest proof, when we have to do with children, that "the help which is done upon earth, God doeth it himself." All our wisdom will not even make them understand, much less feel, the things of God. The "Instructions for Children" contain the best matter that we can possibly teach them. But nothing less than the finger of God can write it on their hearts. On Saturday night he sent another shower of grace upon our children at Kingswood. Sixteen of them were deeply affected, and I think thirteen found peace with God. Four or five of them were some of the smallest we had, not above seven or eight years old.

Although there may be some use in teaching very young children to "say their prayers daily," yet I judge it to be utterly impossible to teach any to "practise prayer" till they are awakened. For what is prayer but the desire of the soul expressed in words to God, either inwardly or outwardly? How then will you teach them to express a desire who feel no desire at all? When, therefore, Madame Guion talks in that manner, it often makes me afraid that both she and her teacher, Archbishop Fenelon, talked by rote of the things they knew not. Both of them had an amazing genius, but, I doubt, full little experience. It is exceeding certain neither his nor her writings are likely to do us any solid service. We have all the gold that is in them, without the dross; which is often not only useless, but dangerous. Let you and I keep the good old way:

"In doing and bearing the will of our Lord,
We still are preparing to meet our reward."

Go on steadily in this path: there is none better. By patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality. You shall reap, if you faint not.

CLXXXII.—TO THE SAME.

Bristol, September 29, 1773.

Your own experience may give an answer to your question. You did yourself enjoy a foretaste of that constant communion with God, though it did not continue long. And you know it was given you in a moment. It was the same case with all those whom I have known, that are now enabled to pray without ceasing. To every one of them that blessing was given in an instant. So it will be given to you again; although, probably, you will find a strong hope first, which will incite you to cry out,—

"Big with earnest expectation,
See me sit at thy feet,
Longing for salvation."

Grace in one sense will make all things new. And I have sometimes known this done to such a degree that

there has been no trace of the natural temper remaining. But generally the innocent natural temper does remain,—only refined, softened, and cast into the mould of love.

CLXXXIII.—TO MR. JOHN MASON.

November 21, 1776.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—One of Mr. Fletcher's Checks considers at large the Calvinistic supposition, "that a natural man is *as dead as a stone*;" and shows the utter falseness and absurdity of it: seeing no man living is without some preventing grace, and every degree of grace is a degree of life.

That, "by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men" (all born into the world) "unto condemnation," is an undoubted truth; and affects every infant, as well as every adult person. But it is equally true that, "by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men" (all born into the world, infant or adult) "unto justification." Therefore no infant ever was, or ever will be, "sent to hell for the guilt of Adam's sin;" seeing it is cancelled by the righteousness of Christ as soon as they are sent into the world.

Labour on, especially by visiting from house to house, and you will see the fruit of your labour.

CLXXXIV.—TO THE SAME.

Near London, January 13, 1790.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—As long as I live, the people shall have no share in choosing either stewards or leaders among the Methodists. We have not, and never had, any such custom. We are no republicans, and never intend to be. It would be better for those that are so minded to go quietly away. I have been uniform both in doctrine and discipline for above these fifty years; and it is a little too late for me to turn into a new path now I am gray-headed. Neither good old brother Pascoe (God bless him) expects it from me, nor brother Wood, nor brother Flamank. If you and I should be called hence this year, we may bless God that we have not lived in vain. Come, let us have a few more strokes at Satan's kingdom, and then we shall depart in peace!

CLXXXV.—TO MISS BRIGGS.

Chester, March 17, 1771.

MY DEAR BETSY,—You have great reason to praise Him who has done great things for you already. What you now want is, to come boldly to the throne of grace, that the hunger and thirst after his full image which God has given you may be satisfied. Full salvation is nigh, even at the door. Only believe, and it is yours. It is a great blessing, that, at your years, you are preserved from seeking happiness in any creature. You need not, seeing Christ is yours! O cleave to him with your whole heart!

CLXXXVI.—TO THE SAME.

Athlone, April 14, 1771.

MY DEAR BETSY,—You may be assured that I am always well pleased to hear from you; and that I shall never think your letters too long. Always tell me whatever is in your heart; and the more freely the better. Otherwise it would be hardly possible to give you the advice you may want from time to time. As soon as you had your armour on, it was fit that it should be proved: so God prepared for you the occasions of fighting, that you might conquer, and might know both your own weakness and his strength. Each day will bring just temptation enough, and power enough to conquer it: and, as one says, “temptations, with distinct deliverances from them, avail much.” The unction of the Holy One is given to believers for this very end,—to enable them to distinguish (which otherwise would be impossible) between sin and temptation. And this you will do, not by any general rule, but by listening to him on all particular occasions, and by your consulting with those that have experience in the ways of God. Undoubtedly, both you, and Philothea, and my dear Miss Perronet, are now more particularly called to speak for God. In so doing you must expect to meet with many things which are not pleasing to flesh and blood. But all is well. So much

the more will you be conformed to the death of Christ. Go on in his name, and in the power of his might. Suffer and conquer all things.

CLXXXVII.—TO THE SAME.

Castlebar, May 31, 1771.

MY DEAR BETSY,—You judge exceeding right: as yet you are but a little child, just a babe in the pure love of Christ. As a little child, hang upon him, and simply expect a supply of all your wants. In this respect reasoning profits you nothing: indeed, it is just opposite to believing, whereby you hearken to the inward voice, which says, “Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.” Undoubtedly it would be a cross to declare what God has done for your soul: nay, and afterward Satan would accuse you on the account, telling you, “You did it out of pride.” Yea, and some of your sisters would blame you, and perhaps put the same construction upon it. Nevertheless, if you do it with a single eye, it will be well pleasing to God.

CLXXXVIII.—TO LADY HUNTINGDON.

September 14, 1772.

MY DEAR LADY,—When I received the former letter from your ladyship, I did not know how to answer; and I judged, not only that silence would be the best answer, but also that with which your ladyship would be best pleased. When I received your ladyship's of the 2d instant, I immediately saw that it required an answer; only I waited till the hurry of the conference was over, that I might do no thing rashly. I know your ladyship would not “servilely deny the truth.” I think, neither would I; especially that great truth,—justification by faith; which Mr. Law indeed flatly denies, (and yet Mr. Law was a child of God,) but for which I have given up all my worldly hopes, my friends, my reputation; yea, for which I have so often hazarded my life, and, by the grace of God, will do again. The principles established in the Minutes I apprehend to be no way

contrary to this or to that faith, that consistent plan of doctrine which was "once delivered to the saints." I believe whoever calmly considers Mr. Fletcher's Letters will be convinced of this. I fear, therefore, "zeal against those principles" is no less than zeal against the truth, and against the honour of our Lord. The preservation of his honour appears so sacred to me, and has done for above these forty years, that I have counted, and do count, all things loss in comparison of it. But till Mr. Fletcher's printed Letters are answered, I must think every thing spoken against those Minutes is totally destructive of his honour, and a palpable affront to him, both as our prophet and priest, but more especially as the king of his people. Those Letters, which therefore could not be suppressed without betraying the honour of our Lord, largely prove that the Minutes lay no other foundation than that which is laid in Scripture, and which I have been laying, and teaching others to lay, for between thirty and forty years. Indeed, it would be amazing that God should at this day prosper my labours as much if not more than ever, by convincing as well as converting sinners, if I was "establishing another foundation, repugnant to the whole plan of man's salvation under the covenant of grace, as well as the clear meaning of our Established Church, and all other Protestant churches." This is a charge indeed! but I plead, Not guilty. And till it is proved upon me I must subscribe myself,

My dear lady,

Your ladyship's affectionate but much injured servant.

CLXXXIX.—TO THE REV. DEAN D——.

REV. SIR,—When Dr. Bentley published his Greek Testament, one remarked, "Pity but he would publish the Old; then we should have two New Testaments!" It is done. Those who receive Mr. Hutchinson's emendations certainly have two New Testaments! But I stumble at the threshold. Can we believe that God left his whole church so ignorant of the Scripture till yesterday? And if he was

pleased to reveal the sense of it now, to whom may we suppose he would reveal it? "All Scripture," says Kempis, "must be understood by the same Spirit whereby it was written." And a greater than he says, "Them that are meek will he guide in judgment, and them that are gentle will he learn his way." But was Mr. Hutchinson eminently meek and gentle?

However, in order to learn all I could from his Works, after first consulting them, I carefully read over Mr. Spearman, Mr. Jones's ingenious book, and the Glasgow Abridgment. I read the last with Mr. Thomas Walsh, the best Hebræan I ever knew. I never asked him the meaning of a Hebrew word, but he would immediately tell me how often it occurred in the Bible, and what it meant in each place! We then both observed that Mr. Hutchinson's whole scheme is built upon etymologies; the most uncertain foundation in the world, and the least to be depended upon. We observed, secondly, that if the points be allowed, all his building sinks at once; and, thirdly, that, setting them aside, many of his etymologies are forced and unnatural. He frequently, to find the etymology of one word, squeezes two radices together; a liberty never to be taken where a word may fairly be derived from a single radix.

But may I hazard a few words on the points? Mr. H. affirms that they were invented by the Masorites, only thirteen or fourteen hundred years ago, in order to destroy the sense of Scripture. I doubt this: who can prove it? Who can prove they were not as old as Ezra, if not coeval with the language? Let any one give a fair reading only to what Dr. Cornelius Bayley has offered in his preface to his Hebrew Grammar, and he will be as sick of reading without points as I am; at least till he can answer the doctor's arguments he will not be so positive upon the question.

As to his theology, I first stumble at his profuse encomiums on the Hebrew language. But it may be said, "Is it not the language which God himself used?" And is not Greek too the language which God himself used? And did

he not use it in delivering to man a far more perfect dispensation than that which he delivered in Hebrew? Who can deny it? And does not even this consideration give us reason at least to suspect that the Greek language is as far superior to the Hebrew as the New Testament is to the Old? And, indeed, if we set prejudice aside, and consider both with attention and candour, can we help seeing that the Greek excels the Hebrew as much in beauty and strength as it does in copiousness? I suppose no one from the beginning of the world wrote better Hebrew than Moses. But does not the language of St. Paul excel the language of Moses as much as the knowledge of St. Paul excelled his?

I speak this, even on supposition that you read the Hebrew as I believe Ezra, if not Moses, did, with points; for if we read it in the modern way, without points, I appeal to every competent judge whether it be not the most equivocal.

CXC.—TO MR. RICHARD TOMPSON.

June 28, 1755.

SOME days since I received your favour of the 22d inst., which came exceeding seasonably; for I was just revising my Notes on the fifth chapter to the Romans: one of which I found, upon a closer inspection, seemed to assert such an imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity as might make way for the "horrible decree." I therefore struck it out immediately; as I would willingly do whatsoever should appear to be any way inconsistent with that grand principle, "The Lord is loving to every man; and his mercy is over all his works."

If you have observed any thing in any of the tracts I have published, which you think is not agreeable to Scripture and reason, you will oblige me by pointing it out, and by communicating to me any remarks you have occasionally made. I seek two things in this world,—truth and love. Whoever assists me in this search is a friend indeed, whether personally known or unknown to, sir,

Your humble servant.

CXCI.—TO THE SAME.

July 25, 1755.

SIR,—It would be a pleasure to me to write more largely than my time will now permit. Of all the disputants I have known, you are the most likely to convince me of any mistakes I may be in; because you have found out the great secret of speaking the truth in love. When it is thus proposed, it must surely win its way into every heart which is not purposely shut against it.

That you may clearly see wherein we agree, or wherein we differ, I have sent you the Minutes of some of our late conferences. Several concessions are made therein, both with regard to assurance and Christian perfection; some difficulties cleared, and a few arguments proposed, though very nakedly and briefly. When you have read these, you may come directly to any point of controversy which may still remain: and if you can show me that any farther concessions are needful, I shall make them with great pleasure.

On the subject of your last, I can but just observe, first, With regard to the assurance of faith, I apprehend that the whole Christian church in the first centuries enjoyed it. For though we have few points of doctrine explicitly taught in the small remains of the ante-Nicene fathers; yet I think none that carefully reads Clemens Romanus, Ignatius, Polycarp, Origen, or any other of them, can doubt whether either the writer himself possessed it, or all whom he mentions as real Christians. And I really conceive, both from the "*Harmonia Confessionum*," and whatever else I have occasionally read, that all the Reformed Churches in Europe did once believe, "Every true Christian has the divine evidence of his being in favour with God."

So much for authority. The point of experience is touched upon in the conferences.

As to the nature of the thing, I think a divine conviction of pardon is directly implied in the evidence or conviction of things unseen. But if not, it is no absurdity to suppose

that when God pardons a mourning, broken-hearted sinner, his mercy obliges him to another act,—to witness to his spirit that he has pardoned him.

I know that I am accepted ; and yet that knowledge is sometimes shaken, though not destroyed, by doubt or fear. If that knowledge were destroyed, or wholly withdrawn, I could not then say I had Christian faith. To me it appears the same thing to say, “*I know* God has accepted me;” or, “*I have a sure trust* that God has accepted me.”

I agree with you, that justifying faith cannot be a conviction that I am justified ; and that a man who is not assured that his sins are forgiven, may yet have a kind or degree of faith, which distinguishes him, not only from a devil, but also from a heathen, and on which I may admit him to the Lord’s supper. But still I believe the proper Christian faith, which purifies the heart, implies such a conviction.

CXCII.—TO THE SAME.

February 5, 1756.

SIR,—I was in Cornwall when your last was brought to the Foundry, and delivered to my brother. When I returned, it was mislaid, and could not be found ; so that I did not receive it till some months after the date.

You judge right, with regard to the tract enclosed to you. It was sent to you by mistake, for another that bears the same name.

Christian perfection, we agree, may stand aside for the present. The point now to be considered is Christian faith. This, I apprehend, implies a divine evidence or conviction of our acceptance. You apprehend it does not.

In debating this (or indeed any) point with you, I lie under a great disadvantage. First, you know me ; whereas I do not know you. Secondly, I am a very slow, you seem to be a very swift, writer. Thirdly, my time is so taken up, from day to day, and from week to week, that I can spare very little from my stated employments ; so that I

can neither write so largely, nor so accurately, as I might otherwise do. All, therefore, which you can expect from me is, not a close-wrought chain of connected arguments, but a short sketch of what I should deduce more at large, if I had more leisure.

I believe the ancient fathers are far from being silent on our question; though none, that I know, have treated it professedly. But I have not leisure to wade through that sea. Only to the argument from the baptism of heretics I reply, If any had averred, during that warm controversy, "I received a sense of pardon when I was baptized by such a heretic," those on the other side would in nowise have believed him, so that the dispute would have remained as warm as ever. I know this from plain fact. Many have received a sense of pardon when I baptized them. But who will believe them when they assert it? Who will put any dispute on this issue?

I know, likewise, that Luther, Melancthon, and many other (if not all) of the reformers, frequently and strongly assert that every believer is conscious of his own acceptance with God; and that by a supernatural evidence, which if any choose to term immediate revelation he may. But neither have I leisure to re-examine this cloud of witnesses. Nor, indeed, as you justly observe, would the testimony of them all together be sufficient to establish an unscriptural doctrine. Therefore, after all, we must be determined by higher evidence. And herein we are clearly agreed: we both appeal "to the law and to the testimony." May God enable us to understand it aright!

But, first, that you may not beat the air by disproving what I never intended to prove, I will show you as distinctly as I can, what my sentiments are upon the question; and the rather, because I plainly perceive you do not yet understand them. You seem to think I allow no degrees in grace; and that I make no distinction between the full assurance of faith and a low or common measure of it.

Several years ago, some clergymen, and other gentle-

men, with whom we had a free conversation, proposed the following questions to my brother and me, to which we gave the answers subjoined:—

“June 25, 1744.

“QUESTION. What is faith?

“ANSWER. Faith, in general, is a divine, supernatural *ελεγχος** of things not seen; that is, of past, future, or spiritual. It is a spiritual sight of God, and the things of God. Justifying faith is a divine *ελεγχος* that Christ loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*.

“Have all Christians this faith? And may not a man have it, and not know it?

“That all Christians have such a faith as implies a consciousness of God’s love, appears from Rom. viii, 15; Eph. iv, 32; 2 Cor. xiii, 5; Heb. viii, 10; 1 John iv, 10; v, 1, &c. And that no man can have it, and not know that he has, appears from the nature of the thing. For faith after repentance is ease after pain, rest after toil, light after darkness. It appears also from its immediate fruits; which are peace, joy, love, and power over sin.

“Q. Does any one believe any longer than he sees, loves, obeys God?

“A. We apprehend not: *seeing God* being the very essence of faith; love and obedience, the inseparable properties of it.”

“August 2, 1745.

“QUESTION. Is an assurance of God’s pardoning love absolutely necessary to our being in his favour? Or may there possibly be some exempt cases?

“ANSWER. We dare not positively say there are not.

“Q. Is it necessary to final salvation in those (as Papists) who never heard it preached?

“A. We know not how far invincible ignorance may excuse. ‘Love hopeth all things.’

“Q. But what, if one who does hear it preached should die without it?

* Evidence or conviction.—Ed.

"A. We determine nothing. We leave his soul in the hands of Him that made it.

"Q. Does a man believe any longer than he sees a reconciled God?

"A. We conceive not. But we allow there may be very many degrees of seeing God; even as many as are between seeing the sun with the eyelids closed, and with the eyes open."

The doctrine which I espouse till I receive farther light being thus explained and limited, I observe,—

First. A divine conviction of my being reconciled to God is, I think, directly implied (not in a divine evidence or conviction of something else, but) in a divine conviction that Christ loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*; and still more clearly in the Spirit's bearing witness with my spirit that I am a child of God.

Secondly. I see no reason either to retract or soften the expression, "God's mercy, in some cases, obliges him to act thus and thus." Certainly, as his own nature obliges him (in a very clear and sound sense) to act according to truth and justice in all things; so, in some sense, his love obliged him to give his only Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish. So much for the phrase. My meaning is, the same compassion which moves God to pardon a mourning, broken-hearted sinner, moves him to comfort that mourner by witnessing to his spirit that his sins are pardoned.

Thirdly. You think "full assurance excludes all doubt." I think so too. But there may be faith without *full assurance*. And these lower degrees of faith do not exclude doubts, which frequently mingle therewith, more or less. But this you cannot allow. You say it cannot be shaken without being overthrown; and trust I shall be "convinced, upon reflection, that the distinction between *shaken* and *destroyed* is *absolutely* without a difference." Hark! The wind rises: the house *shakes*; but it is not *overthrown*. It *totters*; but it is not *destroyed*.

You add, "*Assurance* is quite a distinct thing from *faith*. Neither does it depend upon the same agent. Faith is an act of my mind; assurance, an act of the Holy Ghost." I answer, first, 'The assurance in question is no other than the full assurance of faith: therefore it cannot be a distinct thing from faith; but only so high a degree of faith as excludes all doubt and fear. Secondly, This *plerophory*, or *full assurance*, is doubtless wrought in us by the Holy Ghost. But so is every degree of true faith; yet the mind of man is the subject of both. I believe feebly: I believe without all doubt.

Your next remark is, "The Spirit's witnessing that we are accepted cannot be the faith whereby we are accepted." I allow it. A conviction that we are justified cannot be implied in justifying faith.

You subjoin, "*A sure trust* that God hath accepted me is not the same thing with *knowing* that God has accepted me." I think it is the same thing with some degree of that knowledge. But it matters not whether it be so or no. I will not contend for a term. I contend only for this,—that every true Christian believer has "a sure trust and confidence in God that, through the merits of Christ, he is reconciled to God;" and that, in consequence of this, he is able to say, "The life which I now live I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

It is a very little thing to excuse a warm expression, (if you need any such excuse,) while I am convinced of your real good will to,

Sir,

Your servant for Christ's sake.

CXCIII.—TO SAMUEL SPARROW, ESQ.

Near Leeds, July 2, 1772.

DEAR SIR,—I have delayed answering your favour from time to time, hoping for leisure to answer it at large. But when that leisure will come I cannot tell; for in the summer months I am almost continually in motion. So I will delay no longer, but write a little as I can, though not as I would,

I incline to think that when you engaged in business, though you had no leisure for reading polemical writers, you had leisure to converse with those who ridiculed the doctrines which you till then believed, and perhaps of hearing a preacher who disbelieved them, and talked largely against human authority, bodies of divinity, systems of doctrine, and compiling of creeds. These declamations would certainly make an impression upon an unexperienced mind, especially when confirmed by frequent descants upon the errors of translators; although I really believe our English translation, with all its faults, is the best translation of the Bible now in the world. When you had heard a good deal of this kind, then was the time to offer you such arguments as the cause afforded: which, to a mind so prepared, would naturally appear as so many demonstrations. And it is no wonder at all that by lending you a few books, and properly commenting upon them, those new apostles should confirm you in the sentiments which they had so artfully infused.

To the questions which you propose, I answer,—1. I really think that if a hundred or a hundred thousand sincere, honest (I add humble, modest, self-diffident) men were, with attention and care, to read over the New Testament, uninfluenced by any but the Holy Spirit, nine in ten of them at least, if not every one, would discover that the Son of God was “adorable,” and one God with the Father; and would be immediately led to “honour him even as they honoured the Father;” which would be gross, undeniable idolatry, unless he and the Father are one.

2. The doctrine of original sin is surely more humbling to man than the opposite: and I know not what honour we can pay to God, if we think man came out of his hands in the condition wherein he is now. I beg of you, sir, to consider the fact. Give a fair, impartial reading to that account of mankind in their present state which is contained in the book on original sin. It is no play of imagination, but plain, clear fact. We see it with our eyes, and hear it with our ears; daily. Heathens, Turks, Jews,

Christians, of every nation, are such men as are there described. Such are the tempers, such the manners, of lords, gentlemen, clergymen, in England, as well as of tradesmen and the low vulgar. No man in his senses can deny it; and none can account for it, but upon the supposition of original sin.

O sir, how important a thing is this! Can you refuse to worship Him whom "all the angels of God worship?" But if you do worship one that is not the supreme God, you are an idolater!

CXCIV.—TO THE SAME.

Windmill-Hill, October 9, 1773.

DEAR SIR,—On Scripture and common sense I build all my principles. Just so far as it agrees with these I regard human authority.

God could not command me to worship a creature without contradicting himself; therefore, if a voice from heaven bade me honour a creature as I honour the Creator, I should know, this is the voice of Satan, not of God.

The Father and the Son are not "two beings," but "one." As he is man, the Father is doubtless "greater than the Son;" who, as such, "can do nothing of himself," and is no more omniscient than omnipresent. And, as man, he might well say, "I ascend to my Father and your Father," and pray to his Father and his God. He bids his disciples also to pray to him, but never forbids their praying to himself. I take this to be the plain, obvious, easy meaning of our Lord's words; and the only one wherein they are reconcilable with a hundred passages both of the Old and New Testament.

With regard to original sin, (I mean the proneness to evil which is found in every child of man,) you have *supposed* it in the essays with which you favoured me, almost from the beginning to the end: and you have frequently *asserted* it; although you could not assert it in plainer terms than the honest, unbiassed heathens have done: *Vitiis*

*nemo sine nascitur.** Hence, *Omnes naturâ proclives ad libidinem.†* Hence, *Dociles imitandis turpibus et pravis omnes sumus.‡*

But I believe nothing can set this point in a more clear and strong light than the tract which I beg you to accept of. § Accept, likewise, the best wishes of,

Dear sir,

Your affectionate servant.

CXCV.—TO THE SAME.

December 28, 1773.

DEAR SIR,—Upon the head of authority we are quite agreed. Our guides are Scripture and reason. We agree, too, that preachers who “relax our obligation to moral virtues, who decry holiness as filthy rags, who teach men that easy palatable way to heaven of faith without works,” cannot easily fail of having a multitude of hearers; and that therefore it is no wonder if vast numbers crowd Blackfriars church and the chapel at the Lock.

There is also too “just a ground for charging the preachers both there and at the Tabernacle with grievous want of charity.” For most of them flatly maintain, all who do not believe as they believe are in a state of damnation; all who do not believe that absolute decree of election which necessarily infers absolute reprobation.

But none were induced to hear my brother and me, or those connected with us, by any such means as these: just the reverse. We set out upon two principles:—1. None go to heaven without holiness of heart and life. 2. Who-

* This quotation from Horace is thus translated by Smart:—“No one is born without vices.”—Ed.

† This quotation from Terence is thus rendered by Colman:—

“The mind

Falls easily from labour to delight.”—Ed.

‡ This quotation from Juvenal is thus translated by Gifford:—

“For youth is facile, and its yielding will

Receives with fatal ease th’ imprint of ill.”—Ed.

§ Mr. Fletcher’s “Appeal.”—Ed.

soever follows after this (whatever his opinions be) is my "brother, and sister, and mother." And we have not swerved a hair's breadth from either one or the other of these to this day.

Thus it was, that two young men, without a name, without friends, without either power or fortune, "set out from college with principles totally different from those of the common people," to oppose all the world, learned and unlearned; to "combat popular prejudices" of every kind. Our first principle directly attacked all the wickedness, our second, all the bigotry, in the world. Thus they attempted a reformation, not of opinions, (feathers, trifles not worth the naming,) but of men's tempers and lives; of vice in every kind; of every thing contrary to justice, mercy, or truth. And for this it was, that they carried their lives in their hands,—that both the great vulgar and the small looked upon them as mad dogs, and treated them as such; sometimes saying in terms, "Will nobody knock that mad dog on the head?"

Let every one, then, speak as he finds: as for me, I cannot admire either the wisdom, or virtue, or happiness of mankind. Wherever I have been, I have found the bulk of mankind, Christian as well as heathen, deplorably ignorant, vicious, and miserable. I am sure they are so in London and Westminster. Sin and pain are on every side. And who can account for this, but on the supposition that we are in a fallen state? I have proved at large it can no otherwise be accounted for. Yet none need perish; for we have an almighty Saviour; one who is able and willing to save to the uttermost all that come unto God through him.

CXCVI.—TO MISS BOLTON.

Bandon, May 2, 1771.

MY DEAR SISTER,—I wanted much to know how your soul prospered. I could not doubt but the god of this world, the enemy of all righteousness, would use every means to

move you from your steadfastness. Blessed be God, you are not moved; that all his labour has been in vain! Hitherto hath God helped you; and fear not, he will help you to the end. He gives you health as a token for good: he can trust you with it while you give him your heart. And O stand fast in the glorious liberty wherewith he has made you free! You are not called to desire suffering. Innocent nature is averse from pain; only, as soon as his will appears, yours is to sink down before it. Hark! what does he say to you now? "Lovest thou me more than these?" more than these,—

"Wealth, honour, pleasure, or what else
This short-enduring world can give?"

Then "feed my lambs;" carry the little ones in thy bosom; gently lead those that are with young.

Be not weary of well-doing: in due time thou shalt reap, if thou faint not.

CXCVII.—TO THE SAME.

London, June 15, 1771.

MY DEAR SISTER,—A letter from you is always welcome; but never more so than now; as this is the time wherein it seems good to our Lord to try you as by fire. Fear nothing; only believe. He is with you in the fire, so that the flames shall not kindle upon you. O how will you praise him by and by, for his wise and gracious visitation! He is purging away all your dross, that you may be a vessel meet for the Master's use. Happy are they that do his will; and happier still they that suffer it. But, whatever you suffer, cast not away that confidence which hath great recompense of reward. In order to keep it, do not reason, but simply look up to Him that loves you. Tell him, as a little child, all your wants. Look up, and your suit is made: he hears the cry of your heart. And tell all that troubles you to

Yours affectionately.

CXCVIII.—TO THE SAME.

Lynn, November 7, 1771.

MY DEAR SISTER,—At length I have snatched an hour to repeat to you, in writing, the advices which I gave you before. 1. Keep that safe which God has given you: never let slip any blessing which you have received. Regard none who tell you, “You must lose it.” No; you never need lose one degree of love. 2. You never will, provided you are a careful steward of the manifold gifts of God. To him that hath, that is, useth what he hath, it shall be given still, and that more abundantly. Therefore, 3. Use your every grace. Stir up the gift of God that is in you. Be zealous! Be active! Spare no one. Speak for God, wherever you are. But, meantime, 4. Be humble: let all that mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus. And be clothed with humility. Pray that you may always feel that you are nothing, less than nothing, and vanity. In this spirit speak and do every thing, giving all the glory to Him that lives and rules in your heart by faith.

Last night I was reading some advices of a French author, part of which may be of use to you. Only observe, he is writing to one that had living faith, but was not perfected in love.

“How can I distinguish pride from temptation to pride? It is extremely difficult to distinguish these, and still more so to lay down rules for doing it. Our eyes cannot penetrate the ground of our hearts. Pride and vanity are natural to us; and, for that reason, nothing is more constantly at hand, nothing less observed, than their effects. The grand rule is, to sound sincerely the ground of our hearts, when we are not in the hurry of temptation: for if, on inquiry, we find that it loves obscurity and silence; that it dreads applause and distinction; that it esteems the virtue of others, and excuses their faults with mildness; that it easily pardons injuries; that it fears contempt less and less; that it sees a falsehood and baseness in pride, and a

true nobleness and greatness in humility; that it knows and reveres the inestimable riches of the cross, and the humiliations of Jesus Christ; that it fears the lustre of those virtues which are admired by men, and loves those that are more secret; that it draws more comfort even from its own defects, through the abasement which they occasion; and that it prefers any degree of compunction before all the light in the world,—then you may trust that all the motions you feel tending to pride or vanity, whether they are sudden, or are thrust against you for some time, are not sin, but temptation. And then it may be the best to turn from, and despise them, instead of giving them weight by fixing your attention upon them.”

I want a particular account both of your inward and outward health. Tell me how you are, and what you are doing.

CXCIX.—TO THE SAME.

London, December 5, 1772.

MY DEAR SISTER,—I know not that ever you asked me a question which I did not readily answer. I never heard any one mention any thing concerning you on that account; but I myself was jealous over you. Perhaps I shall find faults in you that others do not; for I survey you on every side. I mark your every motion and temper; because I long for you to be without spot or blemish.

What I have seen in London occasioned the first caution I gave you. George Bell, William Green, and many others, then full of love, were favoured with extraordinary revelations and manifestations from God. But by this very thing Satan beguiled them from the simplicity that is in Christ. By insensible degrees they were led to value these extraordinary gifts more than the ordinary grace of God; and I could not convince them that a grain of humble love was better than all these gifts put together. This, my dear friend, was what made me fear for you. This makes me remind you again and again. Faith and hope are glorious

gifts, and so is every ray of eternity let into the soul. But still these are but means: the end of all, and the greatest of all, is love. May the Lord just now pour it into your heart as he never has done before.

By all means spend an hour every other day in the labour of love, even though you cannot help them as you would. Commending you to Him who is able to make you perfect in every good word and work, I am

Yours affectionately.

CC.—TO THE SAME.

London, July 18, 1773.

MY DEAR SISTER,—Your late conversation was exceedingly pleasant to me. I had sometimes been almost inclined to think that your affection was lessened; but I now believe it is not. I trust your love is not grown cold. This gave me much satisfaction, though I could not but be concerned at seeing you so encumbered with worldly business. Surely it will not be so always. But God's time is best! Two or three of those little things I have sent you:—

“ With peaceful mind thy race of duty run :
God nothing does, or suffers to be done,
But what thou wouldst thyself, if thou couldst see
Through all events of things as well as he.

Let thy repentance be without delay :
If thou defer it to another day,
Thou must repent for a day more of sin,
While a day less remains to do it in.

Nor steel nor flint alone produces fire,
Nor spark arises till they both conspire :
Nor faith alone, nor works without, is right ;
Salvation rises when they both unite.

If gold be offer'd thee, thou dost not say,
'To-morrow I will take it, not to-day :'
Salvation offer'd, why art thou so cool
To let thyself become to-morrow's fool ?

Prayer and thanksgiving is the vital breath
That keeps the spirit of a man from death :

For prayer attracts into the living soul
The life that fills the universal whole;
And giving thanks is breathing forth again
The praise of Him who is the life of men.

Two different painters, artists in their way,
Have drawn religion in her full display.
To both she sat : one gazed at her all o'er;
The other fix'd upon her features more.
Hervey has figured her with every grace
That dress could give; but Law has hit her face.

The specious sermons of a learned man
Are little else than flashes in the pan.
The mere haranguing upon what they call
Morality, is powder without ball :
But he who preaches with a Christian grace
Fires at your vices, and the shot takes place.

Faith, Hope, and Love were question'd what they thought
Of future glory, which Religion taught.
Now Faith believed it firmly to be true,
And Hope expected so to find it too :
Love answer'd, smiling with a conscious glow,
'Believe ! expect ! I know it to be so.'

Go on in this humble, gentle love, that you may abound
therein more and more. Aim at nothing higher than this :
and may the God of love still possess you whole, and guide
your every thought, and word, and work. Continue to pray
Your affectionate brother.

CCI.—TO THE SAME.

London, August 8, 1773.

MY DEAR SISTER,—It gives me much pleasure to observe that you do not lose your simplicity. You seem not only to retain simplicity of spirit, (the great thing,) but likewise of sentiment and language. God has indeed dealt very graciously with you from the beginning hitherto. He has led you tenderly by the hand from grace to grace, and from faith to faith: and you may well say,

"The mercy I feel to others I show :
I set to my seal, that Jesus is true."

Go on in his name, and earnestly exhort all that know him to press forward to the mark. Encourage them to aspire after full salvation, salvation into the whole image of God. Beware you do not decline in your zeal for this: let no *prudence* hinder you. Let prudence "guide, not cool, its fire."

"Still let it for his glory burn
With unextinguishable blaze;
And trembling to its source return
In flames of love, and joy, and praise."

But I had forgotten that I am in haste. I hope Mr. S—— will be a blessing to many. He is alive to God. This day I set out for Bristol, and thence to Cornwall; but I hope to be at Bristol again on the 28th instant. Life is short! We have need to improve every moment! Adieu!

CCII.—TO THE SAME.

Bristol, September 27, 1777.

MY DEAR SISTER,—Undoubtedly Satan, who well understands the manner how the mind is influenced by the body, can, by means of those parts in the animal machine which are more immediately subservient to thinking, raise a thousand perceptions and emotions in the mind, so far as God is pleased to permit. I doubt not but he was the chief agent in your late painful exercises. And you gave him advantage by reasoning with him, that is, fighting him with his own weapons; instead of simply looking up, and saying, "Thou shalt answer for me, O Lord my God." You undoubtedly want more thankfulness; and you want more simplicity; that grace, Cambray says, "which cuts the soul off from all unnecessary reflections upon itself." You are encompassed with ten thousand mercies, and the greatest of all is,

"Christ in a pure and spotless heart."

Beware of ever admitting any doubt or reasoning concerning this! Whereunto you have attained, hold fast; and use

all the grace you have received. Warn every one, and exhort every one, and especially those who groan after full salvation.

I cannot, on any account, pass a whole day without commending you to God in prayer.

I thank you for writing to me so soon.

CCIII.—TO THE SAME.

London, January 2, 1781.

MY DEAR SISTER,—It is a great step toward Christian resignation, to be thoroughly convinced of that great truth, that there is no such thing as chance in the world; that fortune is only another name for providence; only it is covered providence. An event the cause of which does not appear, we commonly say, comes by chance. O no; it is guided by an unerring hand; it is the result of infinite wisdom and goodness. Such are all the afflictive circumstances that have followed you in a constant succession, almost from your childhood. He that made the Captain of your salvation perfect through sufferings has called you to walk in the same path, and for the same end; namely, that you may learn obedience, more full, inward obedience, a more perfect conformity to his death by the things that you suffer. A little while, and “he will wipe all tears from your eyes; and there shall be no more sorrow or crying; neither shall there be any more pain;” but you shall hear the great voice out of heaven, saying, “The tabernacle of God is with men; and God himself shall be with them, and be their God!”

CCIV.—TO THE SAME.

Bristol, August 31, 1784.

MY DEAR SISTER,—Many years ago, Mr. Hall, then strong in faith, believed God called him to marry my youngest sister. He told her so. She fully believed him, and none could convince one or the other to the contrary.

I talked with her about it; but she had "so often made it matter of prayer, that she could not be deceived." In a week he dropped her, courted her elder sister, and, as soon as was convenient, married her. The disappointed one then found exactly the same temptations that you do now. But neither did she keep the devil's counsel. She told me all that was in her heart; and the consequence was, that, by the grace of God, she gained a complete victory. So will you. And you will be the better enabled, by your own experience, to guard all, especially young persons, from laying stress upon any thing but the written word of God. Guard them against reasoning in that dangerous manner: "If I was deceived in this, then I was deceived in thinking myself justified." Not at all; although nature, or Satan in the latter case, admirably well mimicked the works of God. By mighty prayer repel all those suggestions, and afterward your faith will be so much the more strengthened; and you will be more than conqueror through Him that loveth you. Whenever you find yourself pressed above measure, you must make another little excursion. While you help others, God will help you. This may be one end of this uncommon dispensation. You must not bury your talent in the earth. Wishing you more and more of that

"Lovely, lasting peace of mind,"

I am yours most affectionately.

CCV.—TO THE SAME.

Wednesbury, March 28, 1785.

MY DEAR SISTER,—You are in danger of falling into both extremes; of making light of, as well as fainting under, his chastening. This you do whenever you look at any circumstance, without seeing the hand of God in it; without saying, at the same instant, This unkindness, this reproach, this returning evil for good, as well as this faintness, this weariness, this pain, is the cup which my Father hath given me. And shall I not drink it? Why does he

give it me? Only for my profit, that I "may be a partaker of his holiness."

I have often found an aptness, both in myself and others, to connect events that have no real relation to each other. So one says, "I am as sure this is the will of God as that I am justified." Another says, "God as surely spake this to my heart as ever he spoke to me at all." This is an exceedingly dangerous way of thinking or speaking. We know not what it may lead us to. It may sap the very foundation of our religion. It may insensibly draw us into Deism or Atheism. My dear Nancy, my sister, my friend, beware of this! The grace of God is sufficient for you! And whatever clouds may interpose between, his banner over you is love. Look to yourself that you lose not the things that you have gained, but that you may receive a full reward. Adieu!

CCVI.—TO THE SAME.

Leeds, August 1, 1789.

MY DEAR SISTER,—I thank you for sending me so particular an account of your sister's death. "Right precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints!" It is well you have learned to say, "'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!" And you can say it even

"When loss of friends ordain'd to know,—
Next pain and guilt, the sorest ill below."

But why does our Lord inflict this upon us? Not merely for his pleasure, but that we may be partakers of his holiness. It is true, one grand means of grace is the doing the will of our Lord. But the suffering it is usually a quicker means, and sinks us deeper into the abyss of love. It hath pleased God to lead you in the way of suffering, from your youth up until now. For the present this is not joyous, but grievous; nevertheless it has yielded peaceable fruit. Your soul is still as a watered garden, as a field

which the Lord hath blessed. Cleave to him still with full purpose of heart. To his tender care I commend you.

CCVII.—TO THE SAME.

High-Wycomb, November 4, 1790

MY DEAR SISTER,—The more I consider your case, the more I am convinced that you are in the school of God, and that the Lord loveth whom he chasteneth. From the time you omitted meeting your class or band, you grieved the Holy Spirit of God, and he gave a commission to Satan to buffet you: nor will that commission ever be revoked till you begin to meet again. Why were you not a mother in Israel?—a repairer of the waste places?—a guide to the blind?—a healer of the sick?—a lifter up of the hands which hung down? Wherever you came, God was with you, and shone upon your path. Many daughters had done virtuously; but thou excelledst them all. Woman, remember the faith! In the name of God, set out again, and do the first works! I exhort you, for my sake, (who tenderly love you,) for God's sake, for the sake of your own soul, begin again without delay. The day after you receive this, go and meet a class or a band. Sick or well, go! If you cannot speak a word, go; and God will go with you. You sink under the sin of omission! My friend, my sister, go! Go, whether you can or not. Break through! Take up your cross. I say again, do the first works, and God will restore your first love!

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